F. DUVAL EMEM F. BLANCHARD

RENAISSANCE

2 / INTERZONE

EUROPE COMICS

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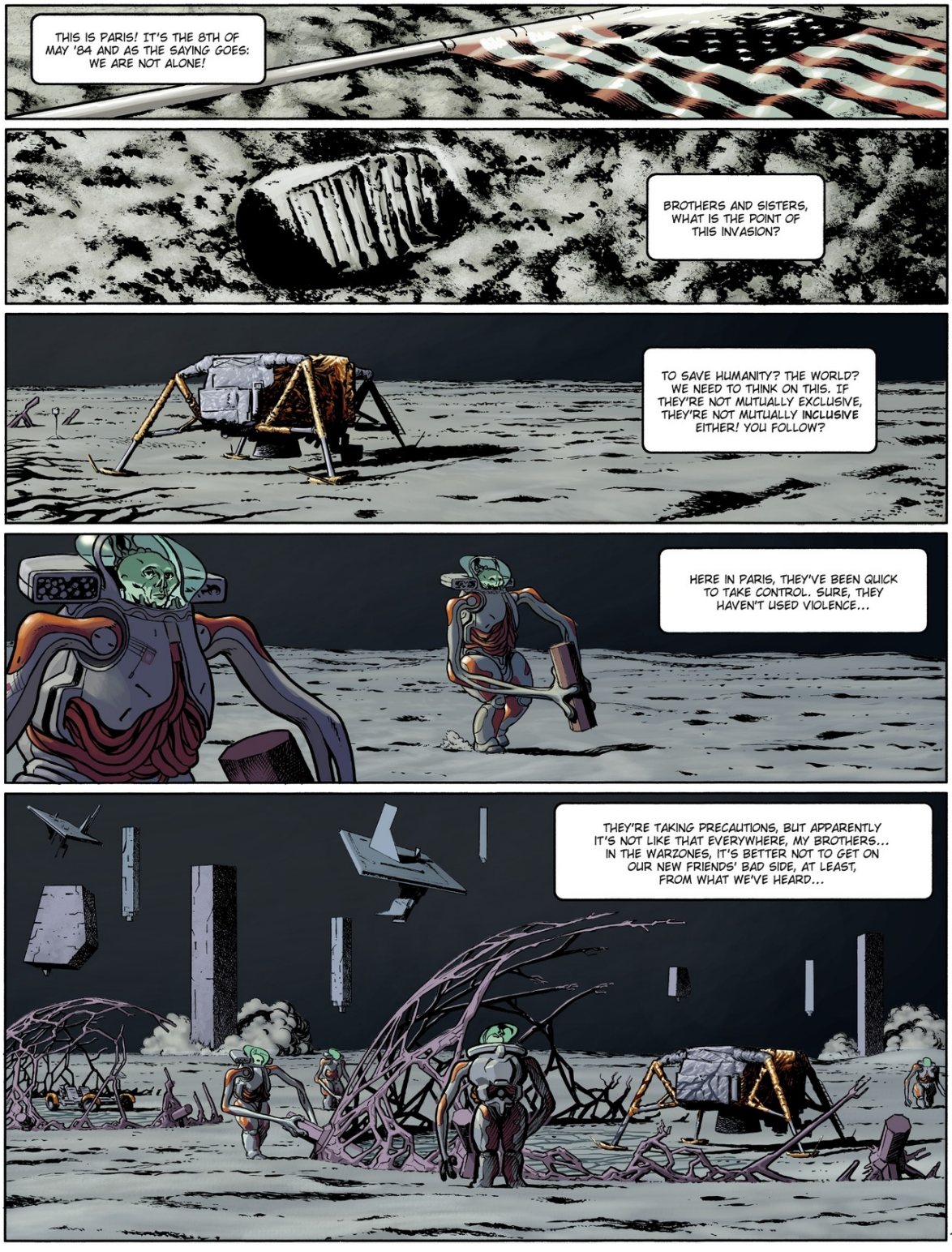
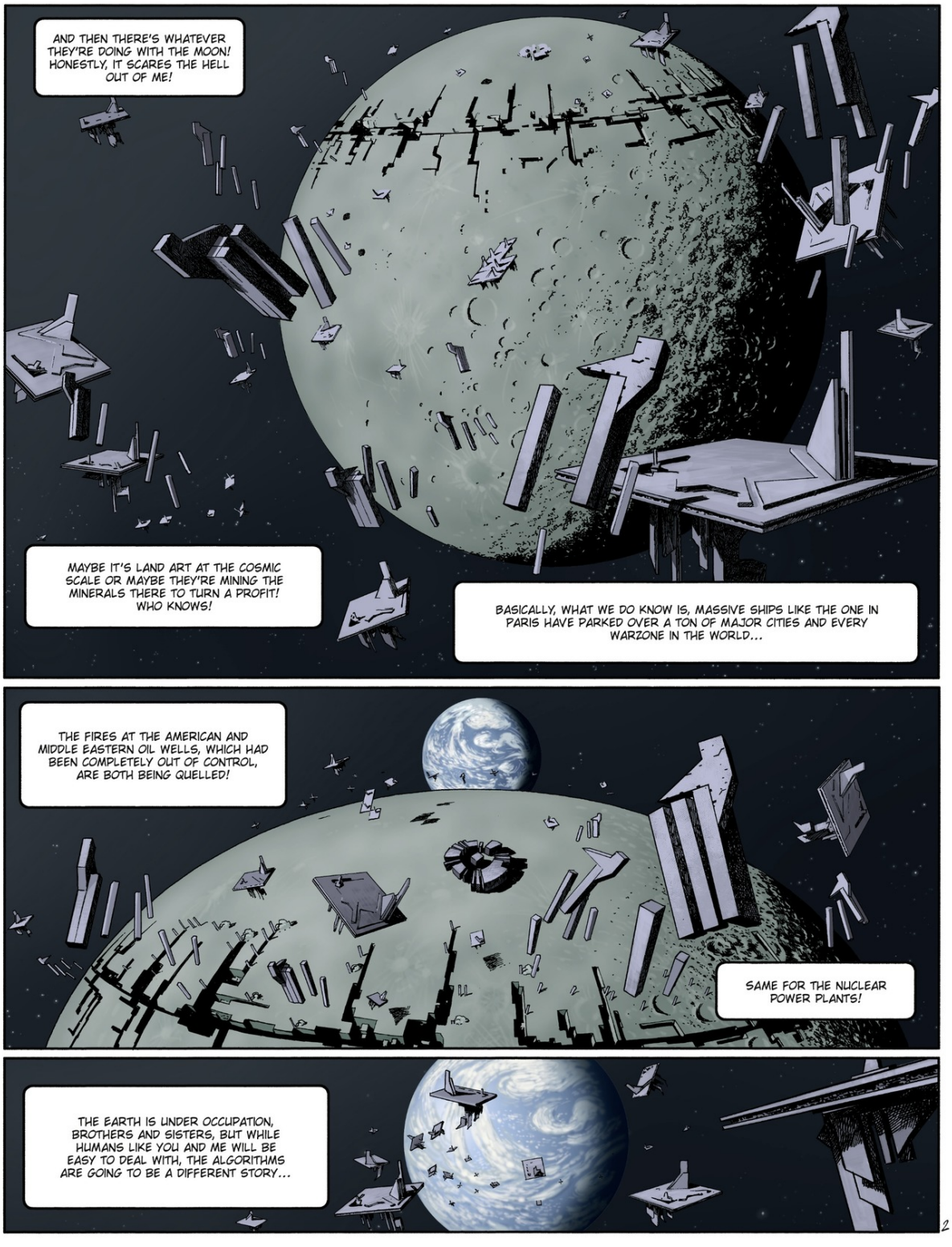
EUROPE COMICS

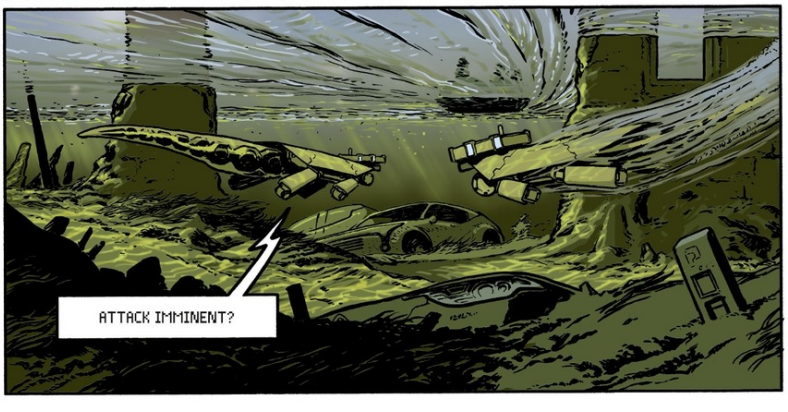

THIS IS PARIS! IT'S THE 8TH OF MAY '84 AND AS THE SAYING GOES: WE ARE NOT ALONE!
BROTHERS AND SISTERS, WHAT IS THE POINT OF THIS INVASION?
TO SAVE HUMANITY? THE WORLD? WE NEED TO THINK ON THIS. IF THEY'RE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE, THEY'RE NOT MUTUALLY INCLUSIVE EITHER! YOU FOLLOW?
HERE IN PARIS, THEY'VE BEEN QUICK TO TAKE CONTROL. SURE, THEY HAVEN'T USED VIOLENCE...
THEY'RE TAKING PRECAUTIONS, BUT APPARENTLY IT'S NOT LIKE THAT EVERYWHERE, MY BROTHERS... IN THE WARZONES, IT'S BETTER NOT TO GET ON OUR NEW FRIENDS' BAD SIDE, AT LEAST, FROM WHAT WE'VE HEARD...


AND THEN THERE'S WHATEVER THEY'RE DOING WITH THE MOON! HONESTLY, IT SCARES THE HELL OUT OF ME!
MAYBE IT'S LAND ART AT THE COSMIC SCALE OR MAYBE THEY'RE MINING THE MINERALS THERE TO TURN A PROFIT! WHO KNOWS!
BASICALLY, WHAT WE DO KNOW IS, MASSIVE SHIPS LIKE THE ONE IN PARIS HAVE PARKED OVER A TON OF MAJOR CITIES AND EVERY WARZONE IN THE WORLD...
THE FIRES AT THE AMERICAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN OIL WELLS, WHICH HAD BEEN COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL, ARE BOTH BEING QUELLED!
SAME FOR THE NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS!
THE EARTH IS UNDER OCCUPATION, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, BUT WHILE HUMANS LIKE YOU AND ME WILL BE EASY TO DEAL WITH, THE ALGORITHMS ARE GOING TO BE A DIFFERENT STORY...

DID YOU LIVE HERE LONG?
THE VEXIN PLATEAU...

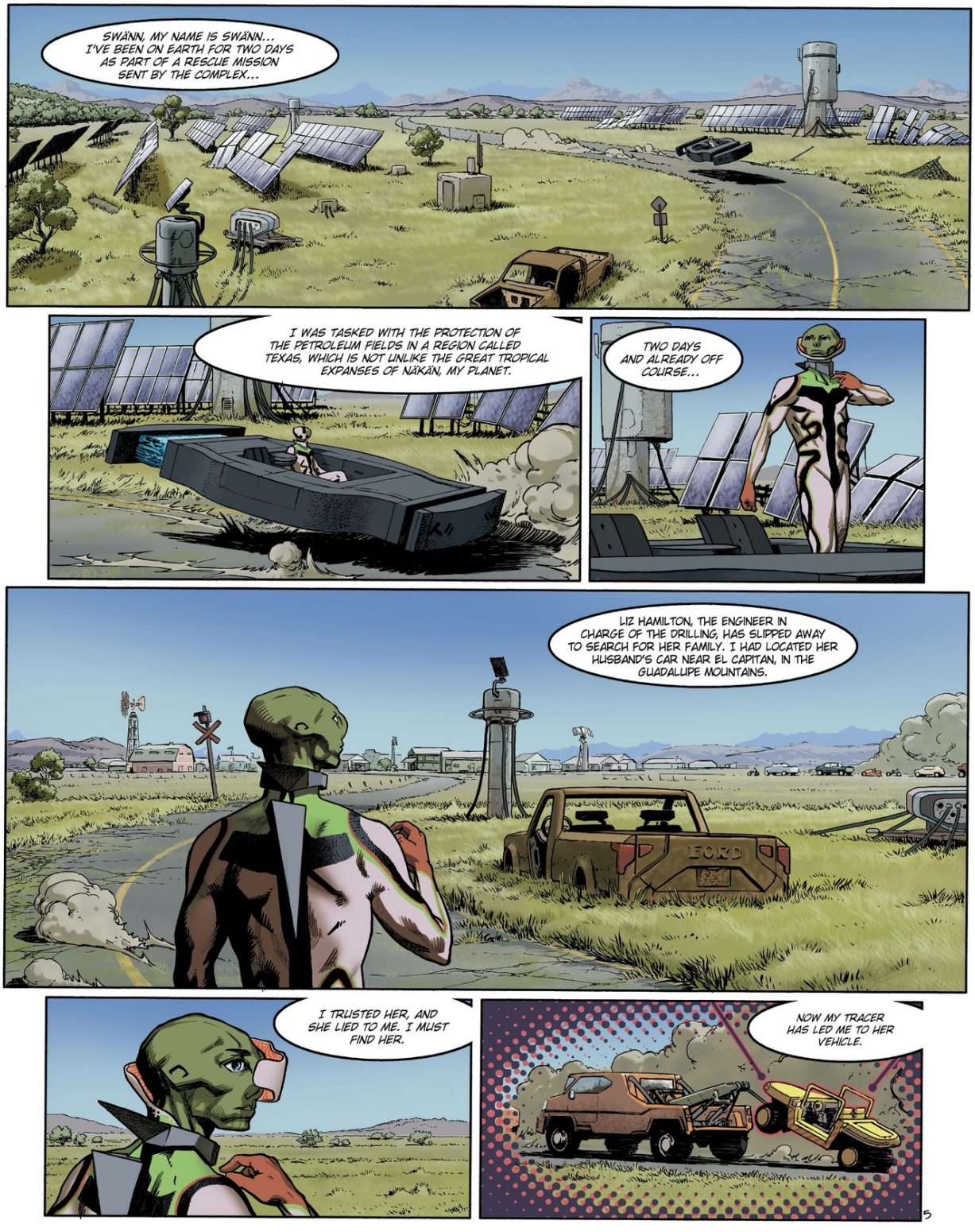
FOR PART OF MY CHILDHOOD, WHEN OUR HOUSE IN SAINT-OUEN COLLAPSED, ALMOST A YEAR AGO, WE DECIDED TO GO INTO EXILE IN THE COUNTRY... GO BACK HOME...

BUT NOTHING WORKED OUT THE WAY WE HOPED IT WOULD... MY PARENTS GOT SICK. AFTER THEY DIED, WE RETURNED TO PARIS.

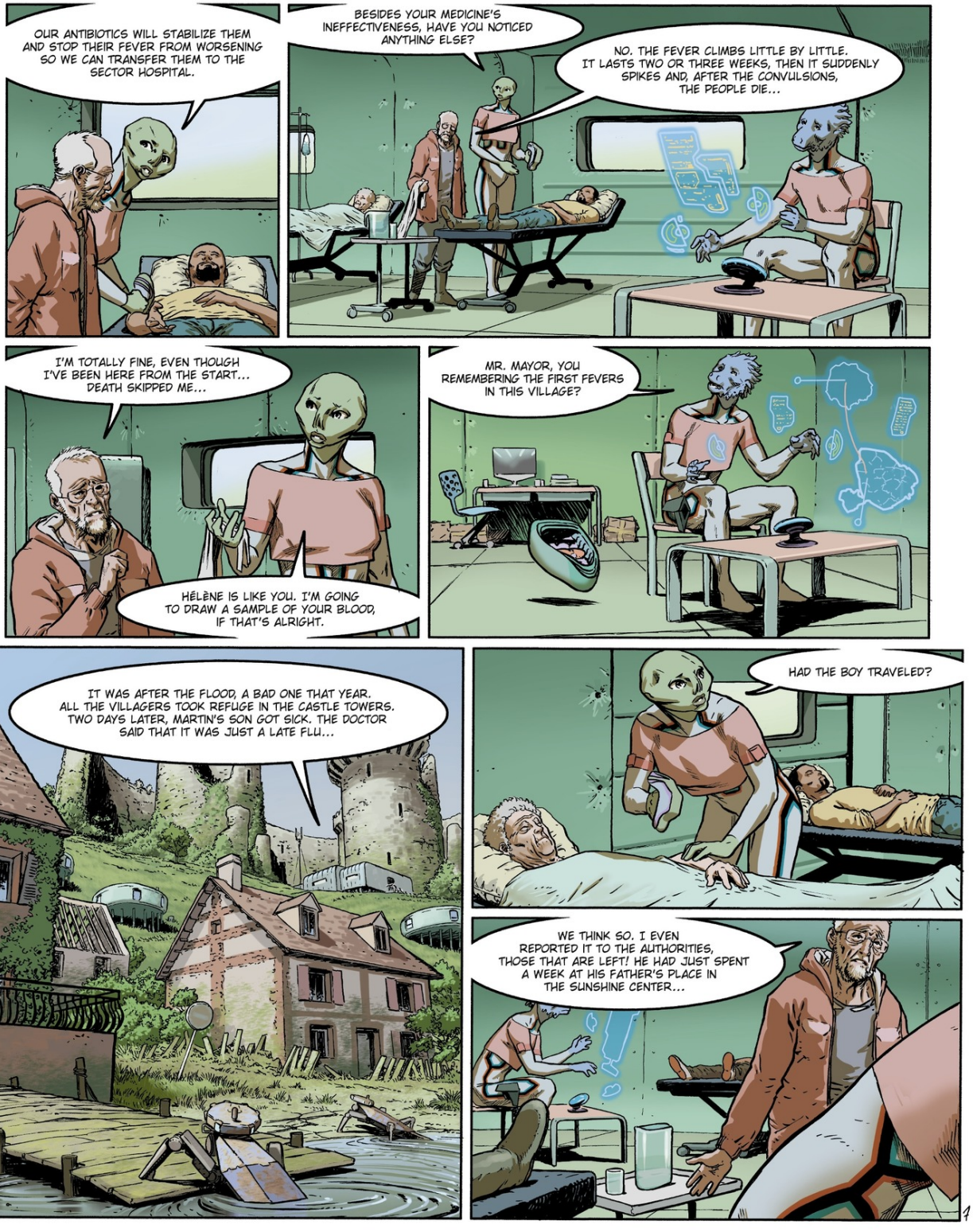

ATTACK IMMINENT?

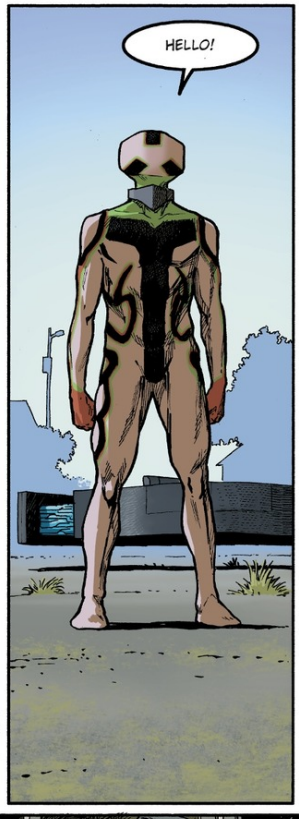
WE BE OBSERVE!

THERE MUST BE A FEW PEOPLE STILL HERE. LET ME TALK TO THEM, OK? YOU MIGHT SPOOK THEM!
CAREFUL, IT'S SLIPPERY! LIKE AN ICE RINK!
HUMAN! FIREARM!
MONSIEUR DAMIEN! IT'S ME, HÉLÈNE! DON'T SHOOT, THERE'S NO DANGER HERE!
HÉLÈNE?


SWÄNN, MY NAME IS SWÄNN... I'VE BEEN ON EARTH FOR TWO DAYS AS PART OF A RESCUE MISSION SENT BY THE COMPLEX...
I WAS TASKED WITH THE PROTECTION OF THE PETROLEUM FIELDS IN A REGION CALLED TEXAS, WHICH IS NOT UNLIKE THE GREAT TROPICAL EXPANSES OF NÄKÄN, MY PLANET.
TWO DAYS AND ALREADY OFF COURSE...
LIZ HAMILTON, THE ENGINEER IN CHARGE OF THE DRILLING, HAS SLIPPED AWAY TO SEARCH FOR HER FAMILY. I HAD LOCATED HER HUSBAND'S CAR NEAR EL CAPITAN, IN THE GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS.
FORD
I TRUSTED HER, AND SHE LIED TO ME. I MUST FIND HER.
NOW MY TRACER HAS LED ME TO HER VEHICLE.
5

SÄTIE ET PABLÖ COME FROM THE SHIP HOVERING OVER PARIS. DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THAT?
THE RADIO SAYS A LOT OF STUFF I FIND HARD TO BELIEVE...
DO NOT BE AFRAID, WE ARE RENAISSANCE. I THINK YOU HAVE SICK PEOPLE HERE WITH YOU, CAN I EXAMINE THEM?
THERE ARE THREE PATIENTS LEFT, ALL THE OTHERS ARE DEAD. THERE'S A MASS GRAVE IF YOU WANT TO SEE IT...
PABLÖ, PREPARE THREE DOSES OF ANTIBIOTICS.
WE BE GO TO SAVE THEM!


OUR ANTIBIOTICS WILL STABILIZE THEM AND STOP THEIR FEVER FROM WORSENING SO WE CAN TRANSFER THEM TO THE SECTOR HOSPITAL.
BESIDES YOUR MEDICINE'S INEFFECTIVENESS, HAVE YOU NOTICED ANYTHING ELSE?
NO. THE FEVER CLIMBS LITTLE BY LITTLE. IT LASTS TWO OR THREE WEEKS, THEN IT SUDDENLY SPIKES AND, AFTER THE CONVULSIONS, THE PEOPLE DIE...
I'M TOTALLY FINE, EVEN THOUGH I'VE BEEN HERE FROM THE START... DEATH SKIPPED ME...
HÉLÈNE IS LIKE YOU. I'M GOING TO DRAW A SAMPLE OF YOUR BLOOD, IF THAT'S ALRIGHT.
MR. MAYOR, YOU REMEMBERING THE FIRST FEVERS IN THIS VILLAGE?
IT WAS AFTER THE FLOOD, A BAD ONE THAT YEAR. ALL THE VILLAGERS TOOK REFUGE IN THE CASTLE TOWERS. TWO DAYS LATER, MARTIN'S SON GOT SICK. THE DOCTOR SAID THAT IT WAS JUST A LATE FLU...
HAD THE BOY TRAVELED?
WE THINK SO. I EVEN REPORTED IT TO THE AUTHORITIES, THOSE THAT ARE LEFT! HE HAD JUST SPENT A WEEK AT HIS FATHER'S PLACE IN THE SUNSHINE CENTER...


HELLO!

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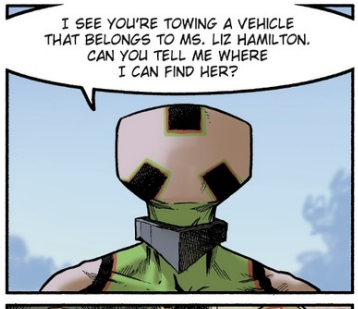
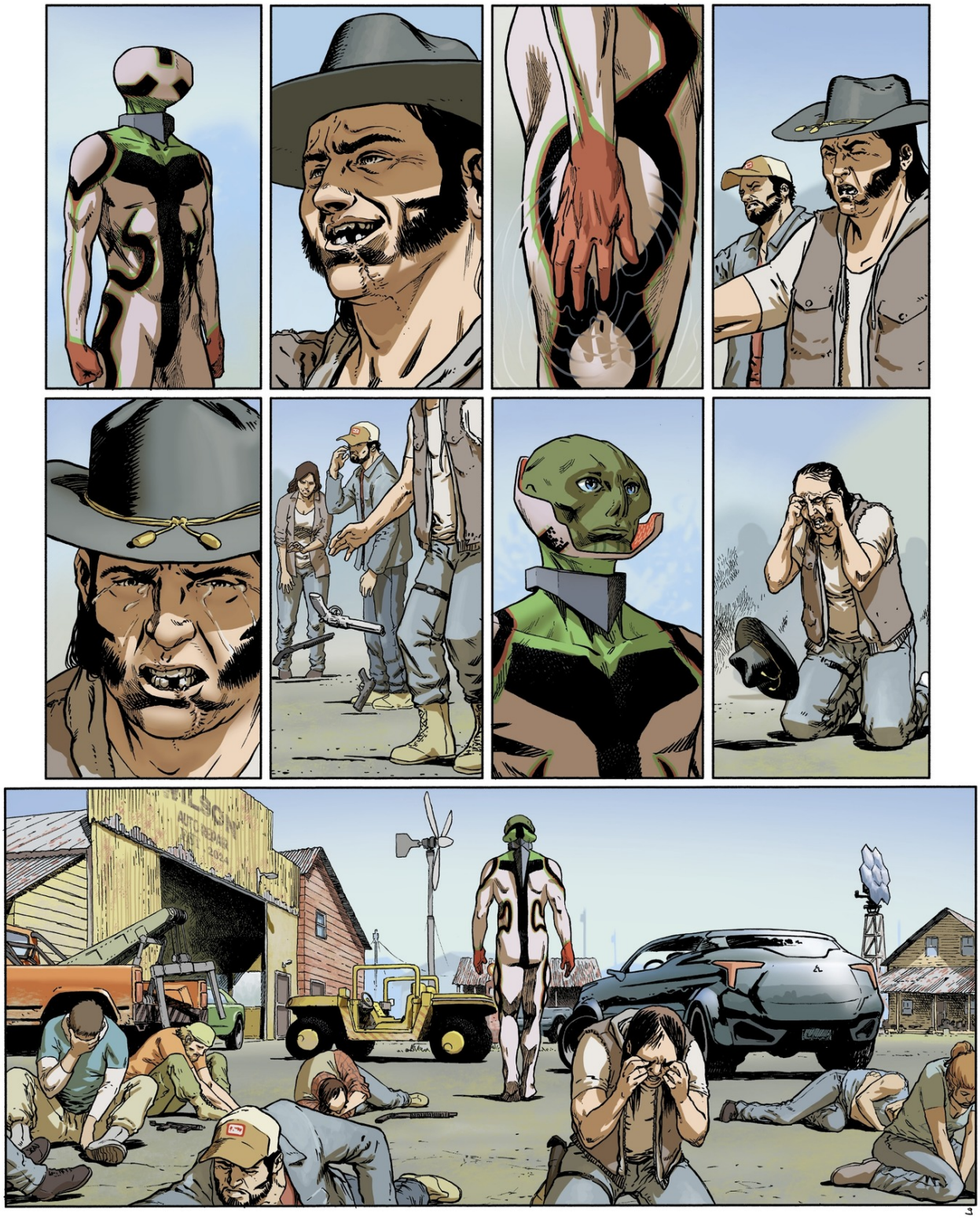
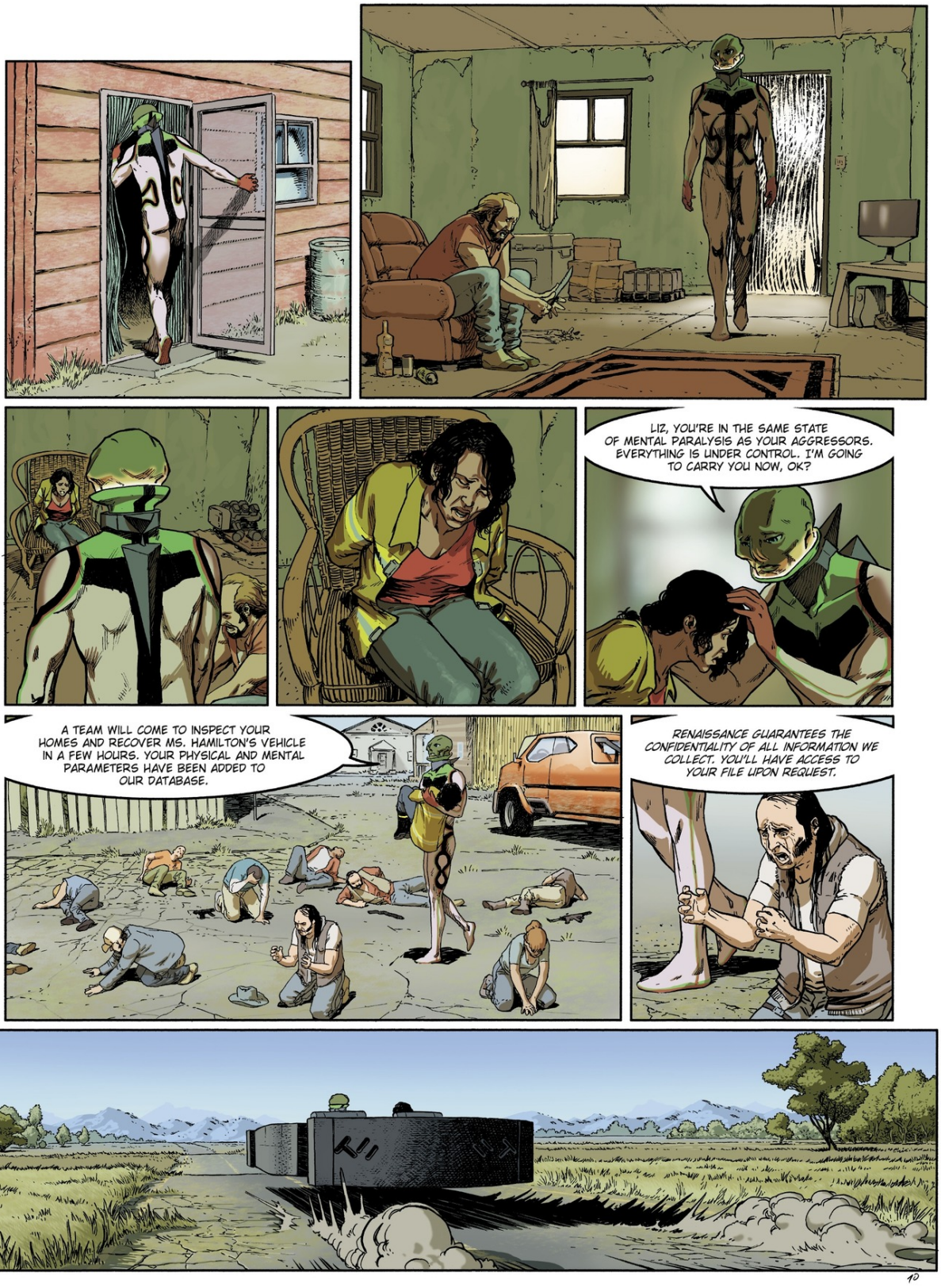
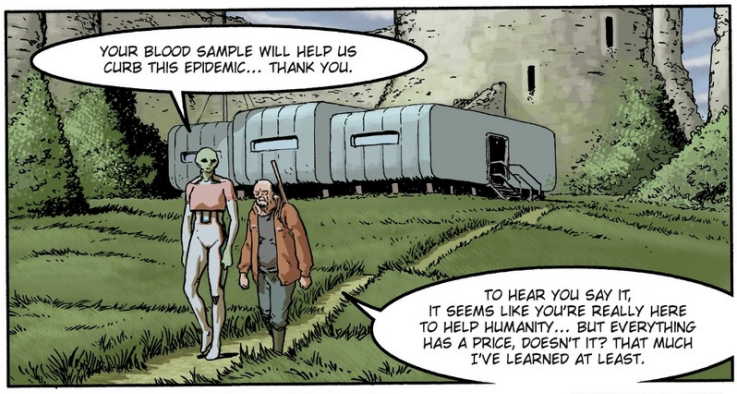

I SEE YOU'RE TOWING A VEHICLE THAT BELONGS TO MS. LIZ HAMILTON. CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE I CAN FIND HER?

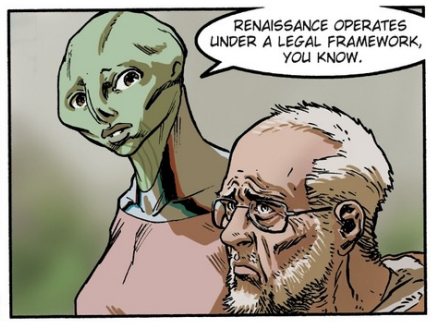
NICE OUTFIT!

TAKE OFF THAT HELMET, BUZZ LIGHTYEAR, AND LET'S SEE IF YOU'VE GOT THE SAME EYES AS EINSTEIN!

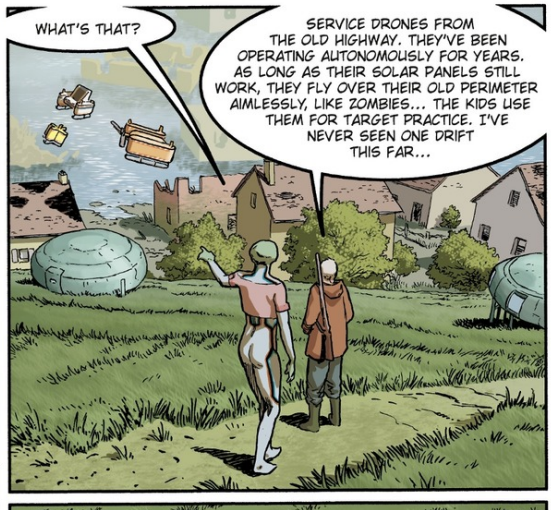


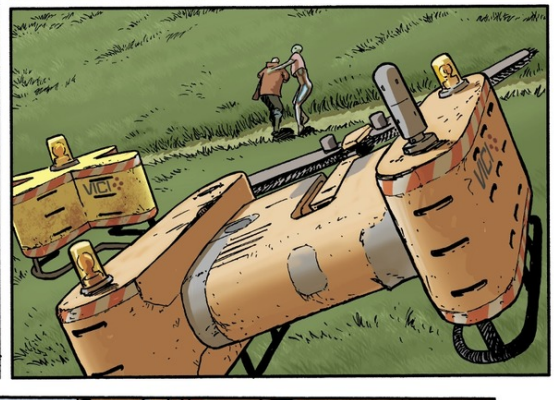

LIZ, YOU'RE IN THE SAME STATE OF MENTAL PARALYSIS AS YOUR AGGRESSORS. EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL. I'M GOING TO CARRY YOU NOW, OK?
A TEAM WILL COME TO INSPECT YOUR HOMES AND RECOVER MS. HAMILTON'S VEHICLE IN A FEW HOURS. YOUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL PARAMETERS HAVE BEEN ADDED TO OUR DATABASE.
RENAISSANCE GUARANTEES THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF ALL INFORMATION WE COLLECT. YOU'LL HAVE ACCESS TO YOUR FILE UPON REQUEST.


YOUR BLOOD SAMPLE WILL HELP US CURB THIS EPIDEMIC... THANK YOU.
TO HEAR YOU SAY IT, IT SEEMS LIKE YOU'RE REALLY HERE TO HELP HUMANITY... BUT EVERYTHING HAS A PRICE, DOESN'T IT? THAT MUCH I'VE LEARNED AT LEAST.


RENAISSANCE OPERATES UNDER A LEGAL FRAMEWORK, YOU KNOW.

YOU HAVEN'T SAID WHERE TO FIND THIS SUNSHINE CENTER.
SOME FIFTY KILOMETERS TO THE WEST, JUST FOLLOW THE VALLEY OF THE SEINE. IT'S IN THE VILLAGE OF VERNON.
VICI
RECHARGE


WHAT'S THAT?
SERVICE DRONES FROM THE OLD HIGHWAY. THEY'VE BEEN OPERATING AUTONOMOUSLY FOR YEARS. AS LONG AS THEIR SOLAR PANELS STILL WORK, THEY FLY OVER THEIR OLD PERIMETER AIMLESSLY, LIKE ZOMBIES... THE KIDS USE THEM FOR TARGET PRACTICE. I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE DRIFT THIS FAR...

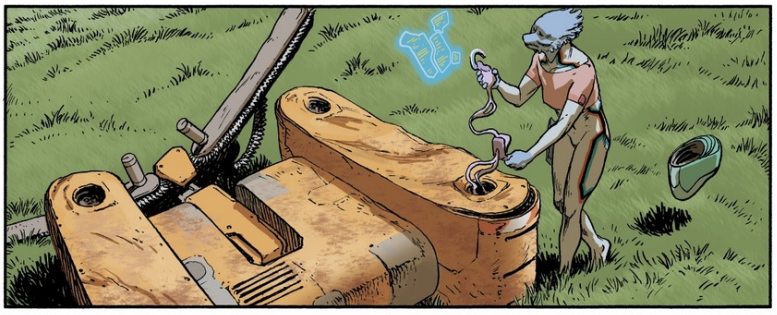

VICI

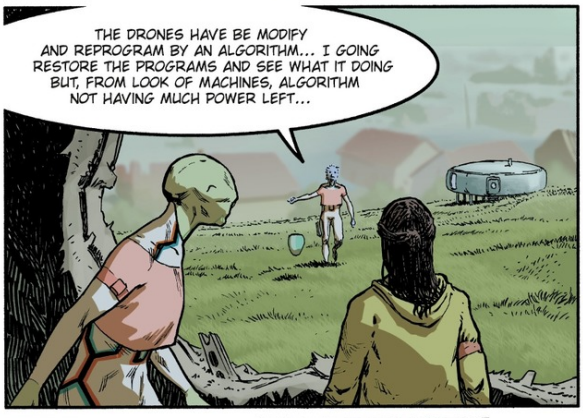
RECHARGE
GET DOWN!

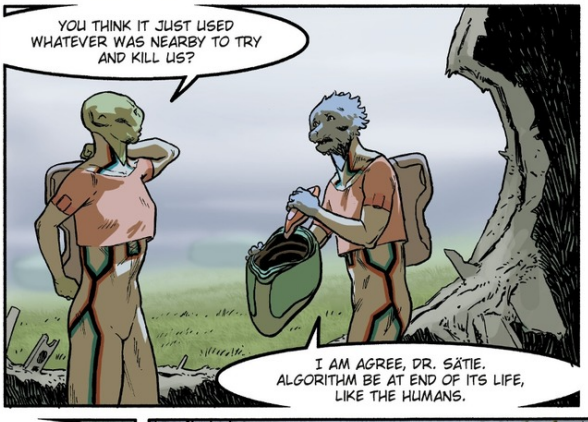
TELL ME WHAT TO DO!
HE'S DEAD!

ATTACK: PARTIAL FAILURE.
GATHER REINFORCEMENTS.

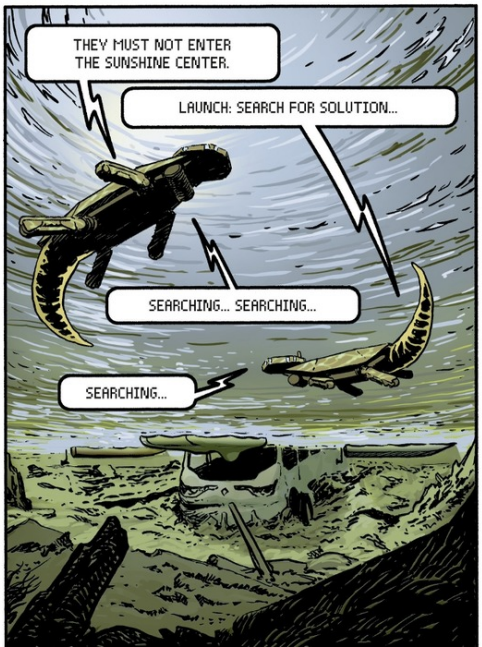
ALL DEAD...
RENAISSANCE WILL COME TAKE CARE OF THE BODIES SOON...

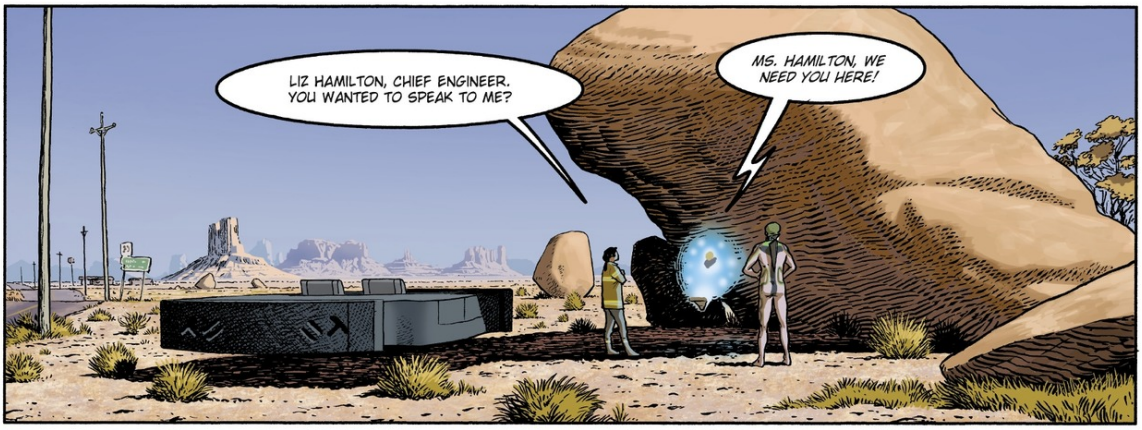



THE DRONES HAVE BE MODIFY AND REPROGRAM BY AN ALGORITHM... I GOING RESTORE THE PROGRAMS AND SEE WHAT IT DOING BUT, FROM LOOK OF MACHINES, ALGORITHM NOT HAVING MUCH POWER LEFT...

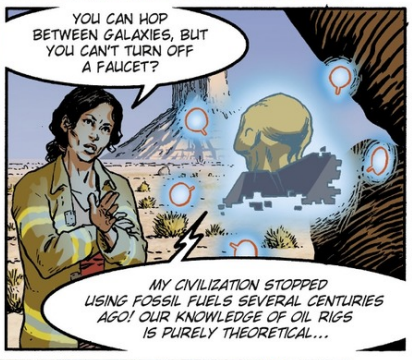

YOU THINK IT JUST USED WHATEVER WAS NEARBY TO TRY AND KILL US?
I AM AGREE, DR. SÄTIE. ALGORITHM BE AT END OF ITS LIFE, LIKE THE HUMANS.

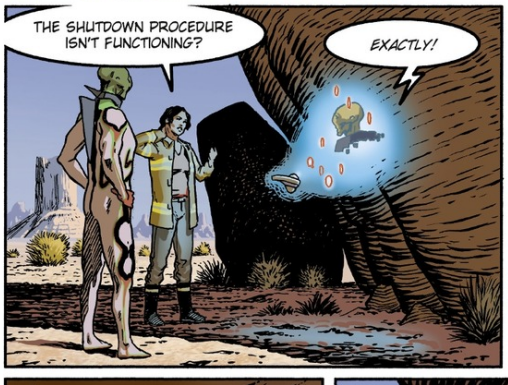
DO YOU KNOW THIS MARTIN, HÉLÈNE? HE'S THE FATHER OF THE CHILD WHO GOT SICK. HE LIVES IN THE SUNSHINE CENTER.
I'M NOT SURE, BUT I THINK I COULD RECOGNIZE HIM IF I SAW HIM...

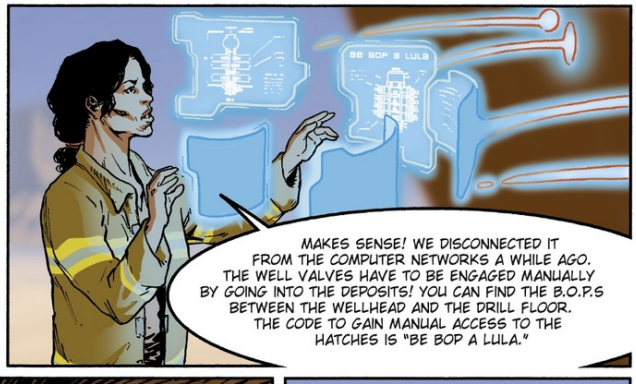

THEY MUST NOT ENTER THE SUNSHINE CENTER.
LAUNCH: SEARCH FOR SOLUTION...
SEARCHING... SEARCHING...
SEARCHING...


LIZ HAMILTON, CHIEF ENGINEER. YOU WANTED TO SPEAK TO ME?
MS. HAMILTON, WE NEED YOU HERE!

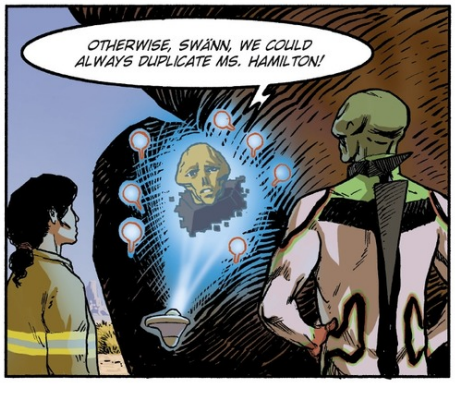
MY TEAM HAS TO PLUG YOUR DEPOSITS, BUT YOUR DRILLING TECHNIQUES ARE TOTALLY FOREIGN TO US...


YOU CAN HOP BETWEEN GALAXIES, BUT YOU CAN'T TURN OFF A FAUCET?
MY CIVILIZATION STOPPED USING FOSSIL FUELS SEVERAL CENTURIES AGO! OUR KNOWLEDGE OF OIL RIGS IS PURELY THEORETICAL...


THE SHUTDOWN PROCEDURE ISN'T FUNCTIONING?
EXACTLY!


BE BOP A LULA
MAKES SENSE! WE DISCONNECTED IT FROM THE COMPUTER NETWORKS A WHILE AGO. THE WELL VALVES HAVE TO BE ENGAGED MANUALLY BY GOING INTO THE DEPOSITS! YOU CAN FIND THE B.O.P.S BETWEEN THE WELLHEAD AND THE DRILL FLOOR. THE CODE TO GAIN MANUAL ACCESS TO THE HATCHES IS "BE BOP A LULA."

"BE BOP A LULA." GOT IT... I'D BE MORE REASSURED IF YOU WERE WITH US, MA'AM. COME BACK QUICK!

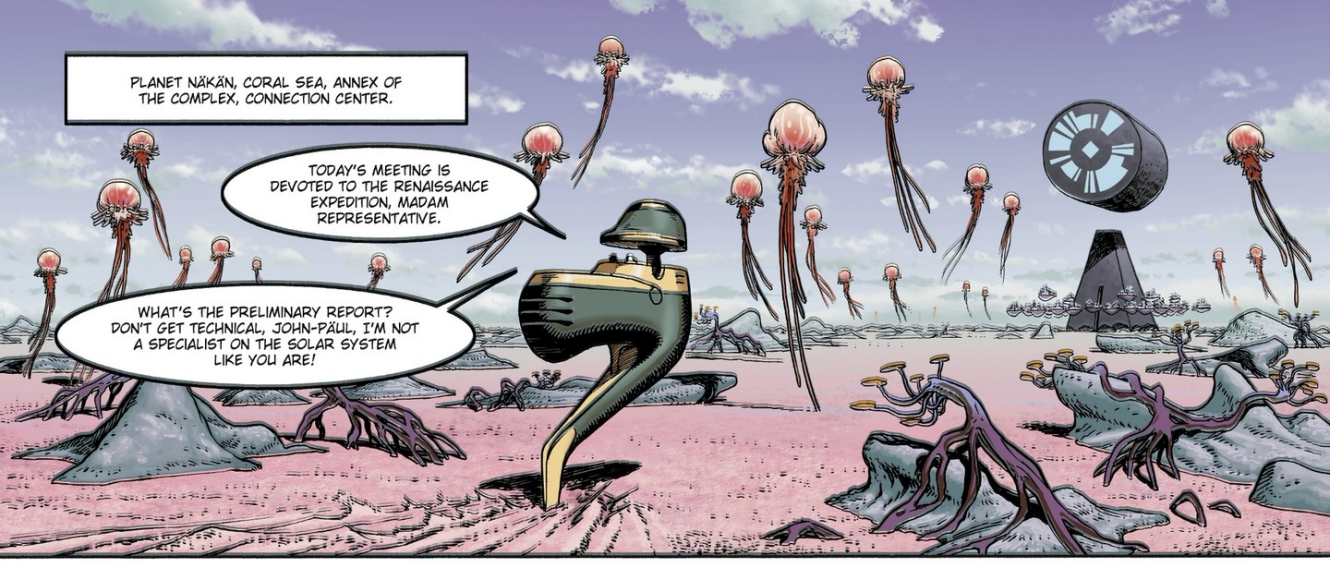

OTHERWISE, SWÄNN, WE COULD ALWAYS DUPLICATE MS. HAMILTON!

I'D PREFER TO AVOID THAT, SIR.

15

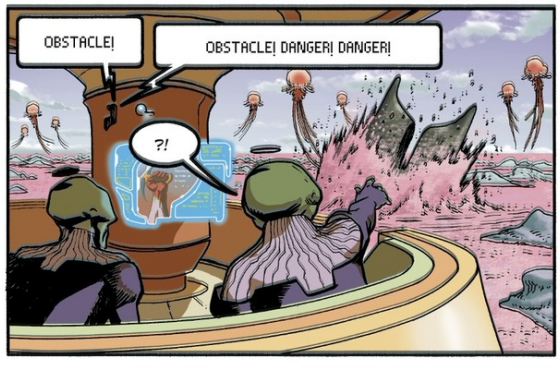
WHAT POWERS YOUR MACHINES?
STELLAR ENERGY, MAINLY. ALONG WITH THE HYDROGEN THAT WE OBTAIN FROM EVERYTHING WE RECYCLE...
YOU'VE KNOWN HOW TO HARNESS YOUR SUN AND WIND FOR A LONG TIME, BUT YOU NEVER REALLY MANAGED TO GET PAST HYDROCARBON...
THAT'S TRUE...
YOUR BOSS, HE MENTIONED DUPLICATION...
I'M NOT GOING TO LIE TO YOU, IT'S A VERY DELICATE OPERATION...
WE SCAN THE SUBJECT, THEN WE PRINT A COPY IN THE PLACE WHERE THEY'RE NEEDED. THE BRAIN IS COPIED, TOO, AND CONTROLLED BY THE ORIGINAL FROM A DISTANCE...
THE PROCEDURE CAN CAUSE A PSYCHIC SHOCK... PLUS, IT'S NEVER BEEN TRIED ON A HUMAN...
MY FAMILY. I HAVE TO FIND MY FAMILY, DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
16

THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING BACK TO THE WELLS!
I... I'D RATHER DIE, ALRIGHT?
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE THAT WEAPON, LIZ, YOU MIGHT HURT YOURSELF.
I WANT TO GO TO THE GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS AND FIND MY HUSBAND'S CAR... THEN YOU CAN DUPLICATE ME AS MANY TIMES AS YOU WANT AND SEND ME DOWN INTO THE WELLS, IF YOUR FIREFIGHTERS CAN'T MANAGE...
ALRIGHT. BUT IF THE TRAIL ENDS THERE, I CAN REQUEST AN AERIAL TRANSPORT TO TAKE US BACK, AND YOU WON'T CAUSE ANY MORE PROBLEMS?
YOU HAVE MY WORD!
YOUR WORD IS WORTHLESS. YOU'VE GIVEN IT AND BROKEN IT BEFORE.
LET'S GO!


PLANET NÄKÄN, CORAL SEA, ANNEX OF THE COMPLEX, CONNECTION CENTER.
TODAY'S MEETING IS DEVOTED TO THE RENAISSANCE EXPEDITION, MADAM REPRESENTATIVE.
WHAT'S THE PRELIMINARY REPORT? DON'T GET TECHNICAL, JOHN-PÄUL, I'M NOT A SPECIALIST ON THE SOLAR SYSTEM LIKE YOU ARE!

SATISFACTORY OVERALL, MA'AM, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL INCIDENTS. THE FORESTERS HAD TO FIGHT OFF DEMENTED MACHINES IN CHINA. DISMANTLING THEM HAS DISRUPTED WATER PURIFICATION EFFORTS.
IN ITALY, A PANIC RESULTED IN 56 EARTHLING DEATHS...

IN TEXAS, OUR TROOPS FOUGHT WITH HUMANS, LEAVING 367 DEAD, INCLUDING 28 OF OUR OWN. AN ETHICS INVESTIGATION HAS BEEN OPENED.
A BOON FOR THOSE WHO OPPOSE THE INTERVENTION...


OBSTACLE!
OBSTACLE! DANGER! DANGER!
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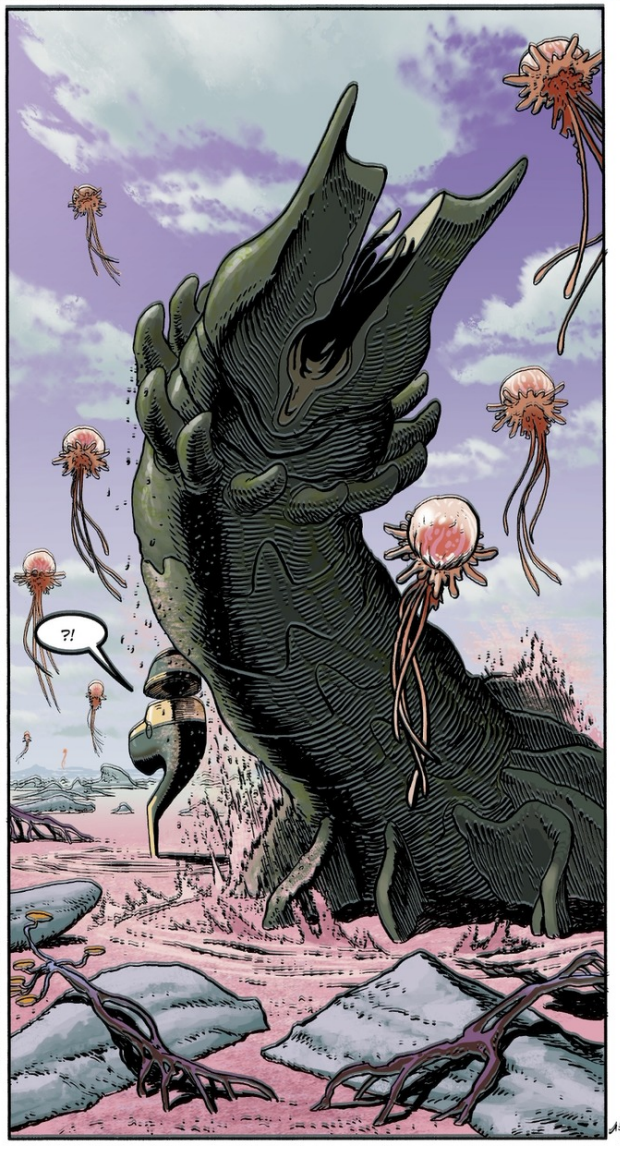
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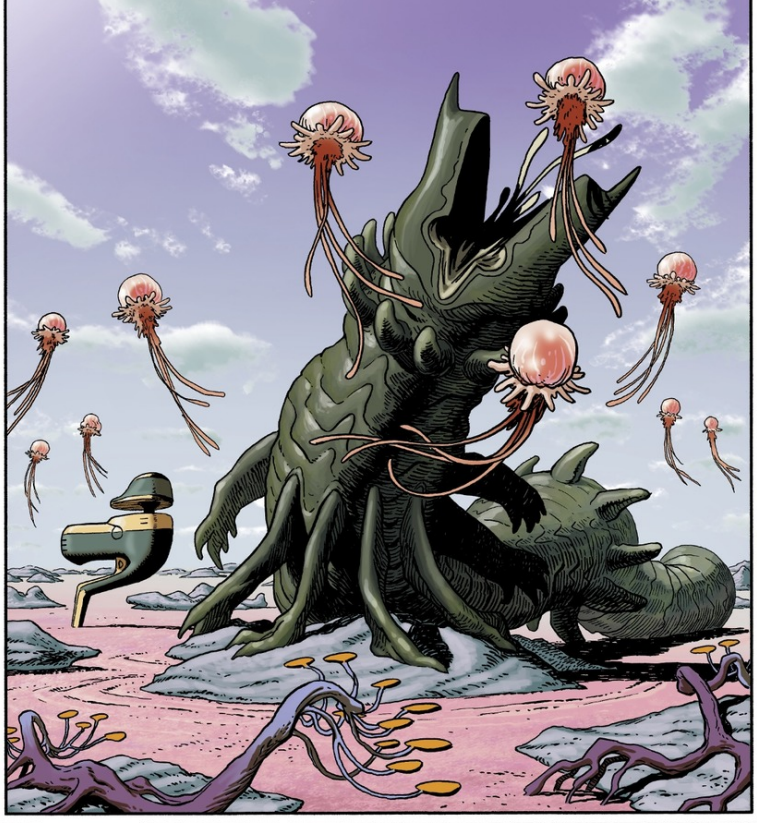
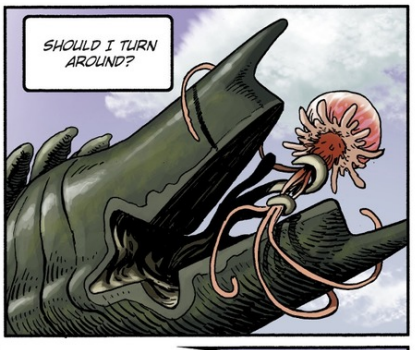
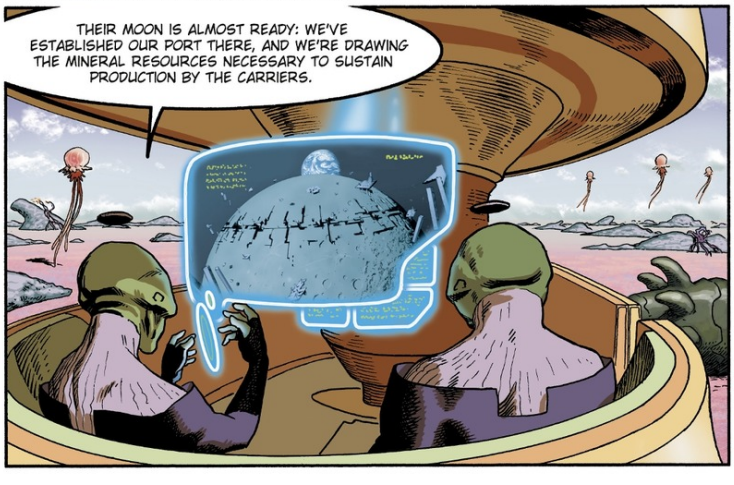



SHOULD I TURN AROUND?

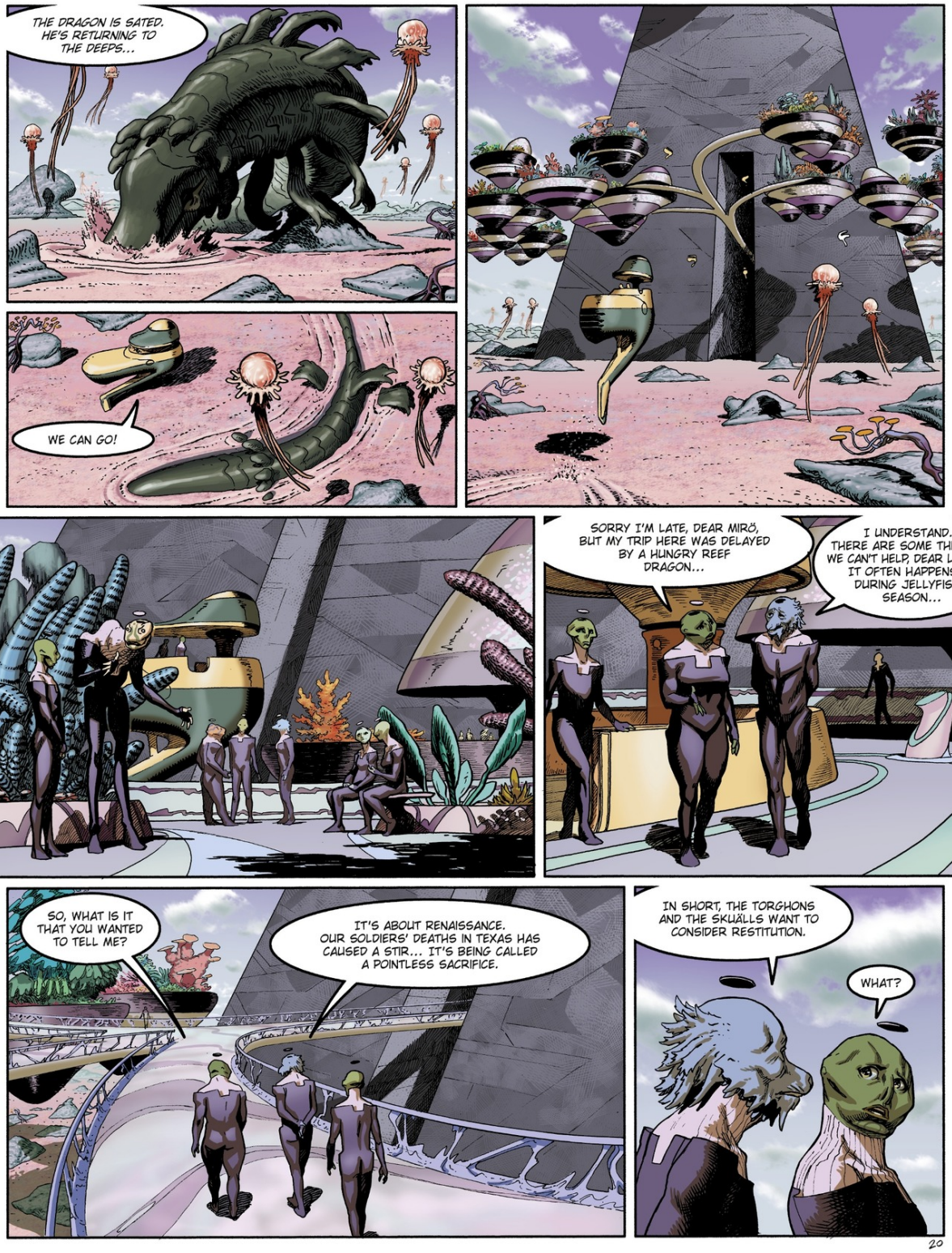
NO, LET'S STAY STILL.

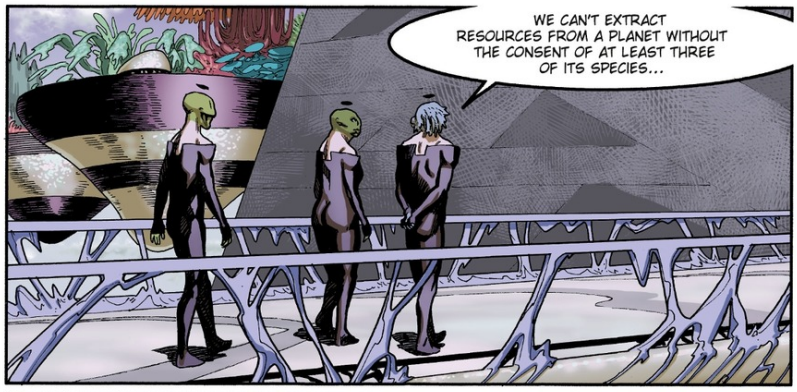
WE WON'T TROUBLE THIS REEF DRAGON WHILE HE EATS.
I... I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE IN REAL LIFE!

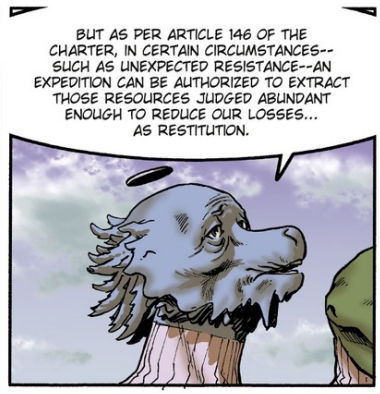
IT'LL TAKE HIM A WHILE. CONTINUE YOUR REPORT, JOHN-PÄUL.
THE GOOD NEWS? OUR 136 CARRIERS ARE NOW OPERATIONAL, SO THE CONSTRUCTION OF EMERGENCY HOUSING IS WELL UNDERWAY. THAT'S ALSO THE CASE FOR THE PROVISION OF FOOD AND WATER IN THE MORE ARID REGIONS.


THEIR MOON IS ALMOST READY: WE'VE ESTABLISHED OUR PORT THERE, AND WE'RE DRAWING THE MINERAL RESOURCES NECESSARY TO SUSTAIN PRODUCTION BY THE CARRIERS.

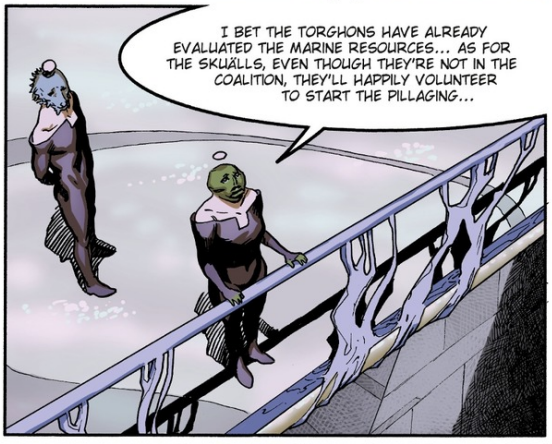
I JUST GOT A MESSAGE FROM THE KÖBALT AMBASSADOR: HE'S GETTING IMPATIENT. HE'LL WAIT FOR YOU IN THE ANNEX GARDENS. HE SAYS HE HAS SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO TELL YOU BEFORE THE COUNCIL MEETING!


THE DRAGON IS SATED. HE'S RETURNING TO THE DEEPS...
WE CAN GO!
SORRY I'M LATE, DEAR MIRÖ, BUT MY TRIP HERE WAS DELAYED BY A HUNGRY REEF DRAGON...
I UNDERSTAND. THERE ARE SOME THINGS WE CAN'T HELP, DEAR LISÄ. IT OFTEN HAPPENS DURING JELLYFISH SEASON...
SO, WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANTED TO TELL ME?
IT'S ABOUT RENAISSANCE. OUR SOLDIERS' DEATHS IN TEXAS HAS CAUSED A STIR... IT'S BEING CALLED A POINTLESS SACRIFICE.
IN SHORT, THE TORGHONS AND THE SKULLS WANT TO CONSIDER RESTITUTION.
WHAT?
20


WE CAN'T EXTRACT RESOURCES FROM A PLANET WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF AT LEAST THREE OF ITS SPECIES...


BUT AS PER ARTICLE 146 OF THE CHARTER, IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES--SUCH AS UNEXPECTED RESISTANCE--AN EXPEDITION CAN BE AUTHORIZED TO EXTRACT THOSE RESOURCES JUDGED ABUNDANT ENOUGH TO REDUCE OUR LOSSES... AS RESTITUTION.

YOU AND I BOTH KNOW THAT WOULD OPEN THE DOOR TO PERMANENT, ONGOING EXTRACTIONS!


I BET THE TORGHONS HAVE ALREADY EVALUATED THE MARINE RESOURCES... AS FOR THE SKUÄLLS, EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE NOT IN THE COALITION, THEY'LL HAPPILY VOLUNTEER TO START THE PILLAGING...

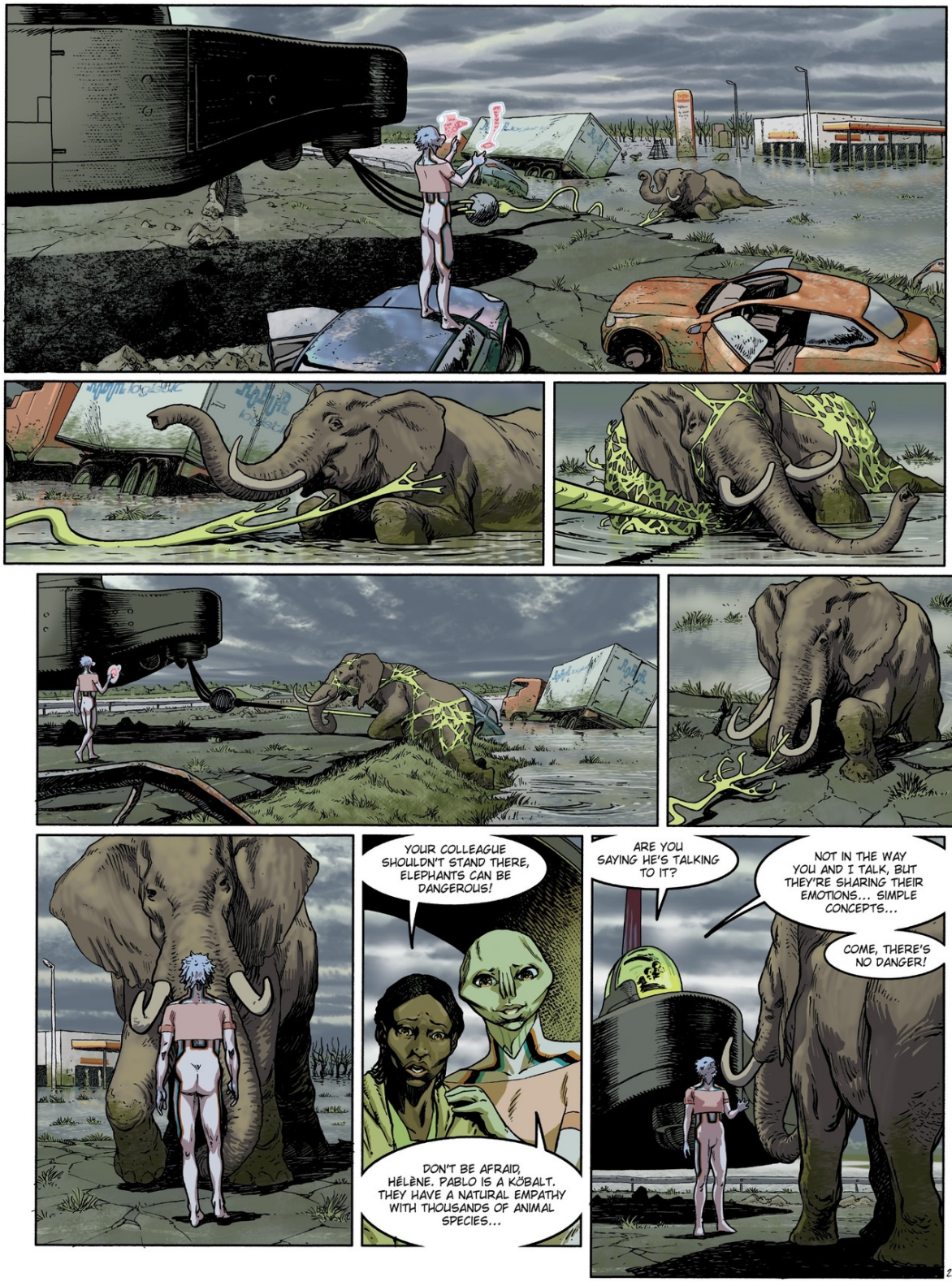
THAT IS WHAT MY CIVILIZATION BELIEVES, TOO, DEAR LISÄ. I AM HERE TO ENSURE NÄKÄN SUPPORTS US IN THE DEBATE TO COME.

I'LL STAND WITH KÖBALT, AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OTHER CONTINENTS WILL FOLLOW ME. I'LL SPEAK TO THEM.

I ONLY HOPE IT WILL BE ENOUGH.

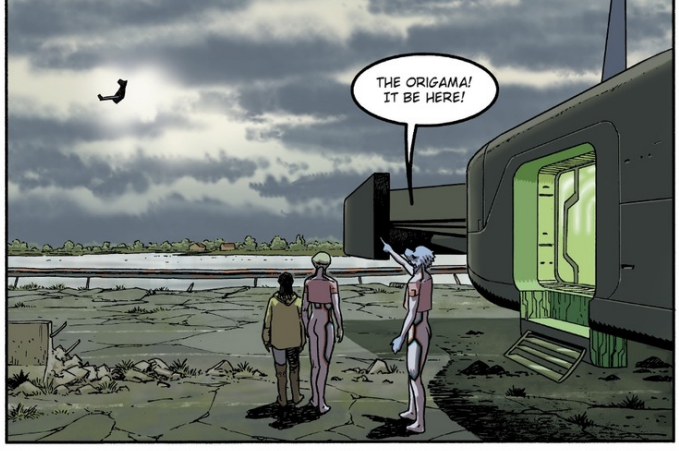
THOSE MEN WHO CAPTURED YOU WANTED YOUR VEHICLE, IS THAT RIGHT, LIZ?
SEEMS LIKE IT, YEAH...
BUT WHAT DID THEY PLAN TO DO WITH YOU? YOU WERE A PRISONER...
WHAT DO YOU THINK? THEY WANTED TO ENSLAVE ME OR SELL ME, WHO KNOWS?
THEY... THEY DIDN'T...
NO, THANKFULLY NOT.
LIZ, I'M TRYING TO UNDERSTAND YOUR SPECIES... ITS URGES, ITS NATURE...
WE NEVER EVOLVED VERY FAR BEYOND SAVAGERY... AND YOU? IS EVERYONE KIND AND BEAUTIFUL ON YOUR WORLD?
NO, OF COURSE NOT...
I HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS I WANT TO ASK, BUT I CAN'T RIGHT NOW. NOT BEFORE I'VE FOUND MY FAMILY...
22

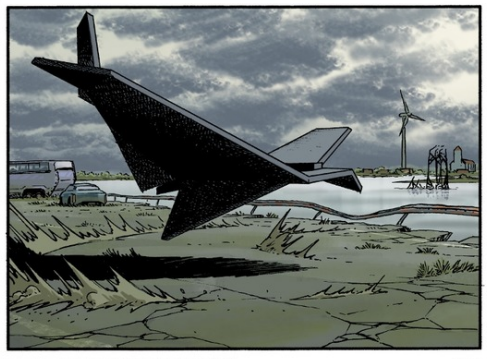
THE PARIS CARRIER IS SENDING US AN ESCORT, AN ORIGAMA HUNTER!
LOOK!
AN ELEPHANT! IT'S TOO WEAK TO GET OUT OF THE SWAMP!
IT'S NOT AN ANIMAL FROM AROUND HERE. I HEARD THAT ZOO WORKERS JUST SET THEM FREE RATHER THAN WATCH THEM DIE... SOMETIMES YOU SEE A STRAY.
IT BE ON THE LIST OF SPECIES TO SAVING.
PABLÖ, WE CAN USE THE JELL-E-FISH, RIGHT?
YES, I ACTIVATING THE PROCEDURE!
23


YOUR COLLEAGUE SHOULDN'T STAND THERE, ELEPHANTS CAN BE DANGEROUS!
DON'T BE AFRAID, HÉLÈNE. PABLO IS A KÖBALT. THEY HAVE A NATURAL EMPATHY WITH THOUSANDS OF ANIMAL SPECIES...
ARE YOU SAYING HE'S TALKING TO IT?
NOT IN THE WAY YOU AND I TALK, BUT THEY'RE SHARING THEIR EMOTIONS... SIMPLE CONCEPTS...
COME, THERE'S NO DANGER!

I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S ALLOWED, BUT PABLÖ CAN CONNECT YOU WITH THE ANIMAL FOR A MOMENT.
RELAX YOU, HÉLÈNE.
RENAISSANCE WILL TAKE CARE OF HIM. THERE ARE LESS THAN 1,000 OF HIS KIND LEFT.
IT FELT SO INCREDIBLE, DESPITE EVERYTHING WE'VE DONE TO THEM... THEY...
THEY DON'T EVEN HATE US FOR IT!

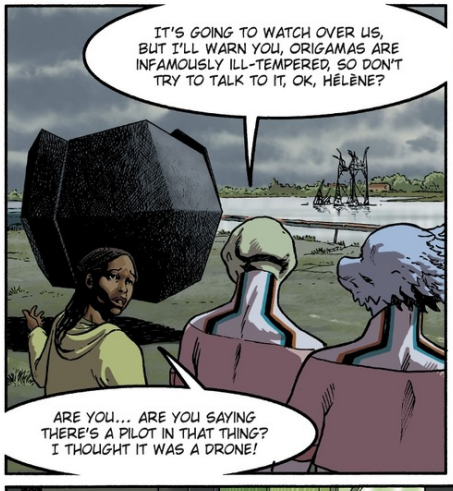
25

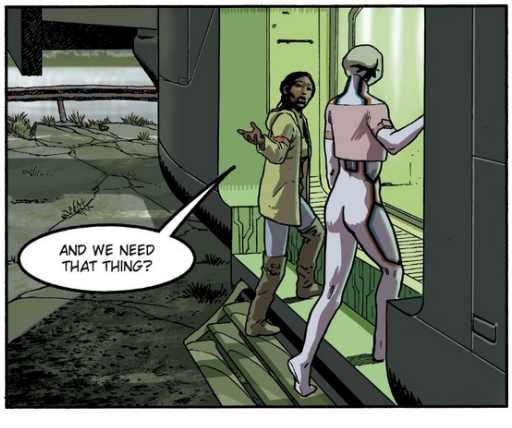

THE ORIGAMA! IT BE HERE!

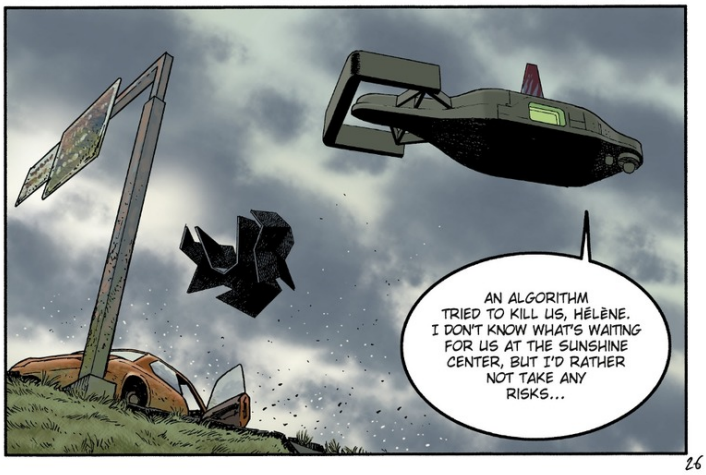


NO, ARMED DRONES HAVE BEEN BANNED BY THE COMPLEX'S CHARTER. BUT IT'S TRUE THAT ORIGAMAS ARE NOT BEINGS OF FLESH AND BONE...

THEY'RE A FORM OF INTELLIGENT CONSCIOUSNESS, BORN AND LIVING IN A GASEOUS STATE, SO THEY'RE ABLE TO PILOT LOW-PROFILE VEHICLES LIKE THIS HUNTER.


IT'S GOING TO WATCH OVER US, BUT I'LL WARN YOU, ORIGAMAS ARE INFAMOUSLY ILL-TEMPERED, SO DON'T TRY TO TALK TO IT, OK, HÉLÈNE?
ARE YOU... ARE YOU SAYING THERE'S A PILOT IN THAT THING? I THOUGHT IT WAS A DRONE!

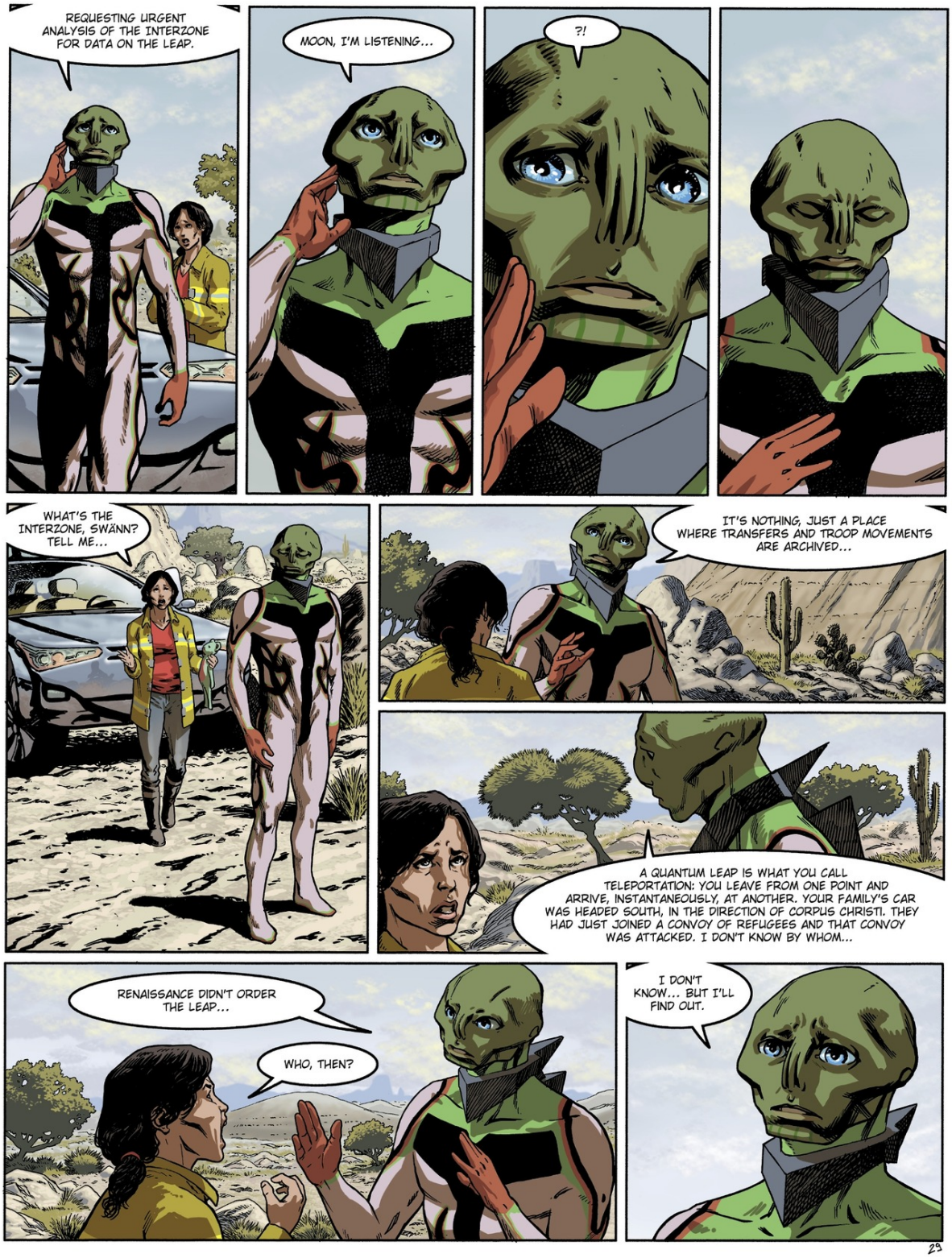

AND WE NEED THAT THING?


AN ALGORITHM TRIED TO KILL US, HÉLÈNE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WAITING FOR US AT THE SUNSHINE CENTER, BUT I'D RATHER NOT TAKE ANY RISKS...

THERE!
THEY'RE... THEY'RE NOT HERE!
I'M GOING TO BRING IT DOWN TO THE GROUND, OK?
27

ALL THEIR THINGS ARE HERE... WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED?
SAY SOMETHING, SWÄNN!
OFFICER SWÄNN OF RENAISSANCE NORTH AMERICA TO LUNAR HQ CARRIER. I'M OPENING AN INVESTIGATION INTO AN ILLEGAL QUANTUM LEAP ON EARTH.
QUANTUM LEAP? WHAT'S THAT?

28


REQUESTING URGENT ANALYSIS OF THE INTERZONE FOR DATA ON THE LEAP.
MOON, I'M LISTENING...
?!
WHAT'S THE INTERZONE, SWÄNN? TELL ME...
IT'S NOTHING, JUST A PLACE WHERE TRANSFERS AND TROOP MOVEMENTS ARE ARCHIVED...
A QUANTUM LEAP IS WHAT YOU CALL TELEPORTATION: YOU LEAVE FROM ONE POINT AND ARRIVE, INSTANTANEOUSLY, AT ANOTHER. YOUR FAMILY'S CAR WAS HEADED SOUTH, IN THE DIRECTION OF CORPUS CHRISTI. THEY HAD JUST JOINED A CONVOY OF REFUGEES AND THAT CONVOY WAS ATTACKED. I DON'T KNOW BY WHOM...
RENAISSANCE DIDN'T ORDER THE LEAP...
WHO, THEN?
I DON'T KNOW... BUT I'LL FIND OUT.
29

THE TORGHONS HAVE THE FLOOR.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES OF NÄKÄN, WE HAVE DIVED INTO THE DEEP BLUE WATERS OF YOUR HUMANITARIAN APPEAL WITHOUT DROWNING IN IT...

ADMIT IT, THE HUMANS YOU WISH TO PROTECT ARE JUST AS WE SUSPECTED: SAVAGE, HOSTILE, SELFISH, AND DANGEROUS. YES, DANGEROUS, BECAUSE LET ME REMIND YOU: 97 MEMBERS OF THE COALITION, 74 OF THEM FROM YOUR NATIVE NÄKÄN, MADAM, HAVE DIED IN JUST THE FIRST FEW DAYS.

FINANCIALLY SPEAKING, THE RENAISSANCE EXPEDITION IS PROVING TO BE A DISASTER. OUR PROVISIONAL BUDGETS ARE ALREADY PLUNGING TOWARDS THE ABYSS... WE'LL HAVE TO VOTE ON NEW FUNDING IF WE WANT TO REMAIN AFLOAT...

IN THE NAME OF THE TORGHON CIVILIZATION, I REQUEST A VOTE TO AUTHORIZE RESTITUTION.

30

THE TERRESTRIAL OCEANS ARE FULL OF RESOURCES THAT ARE OF NO INTEREST TO HUMANS. WE COULD ALSO FINANCE PART OF THE EXPEDITION BY EXPLOITING THEIR DEPOSITS OF PRECIOUS METALS.

THE SKUÄLL PEOPLE, THOUGH NOT INVOLVED IN THE RENAISSANCE EXPEDITION, SUPPORT TORGHON'S PROPOSITION!

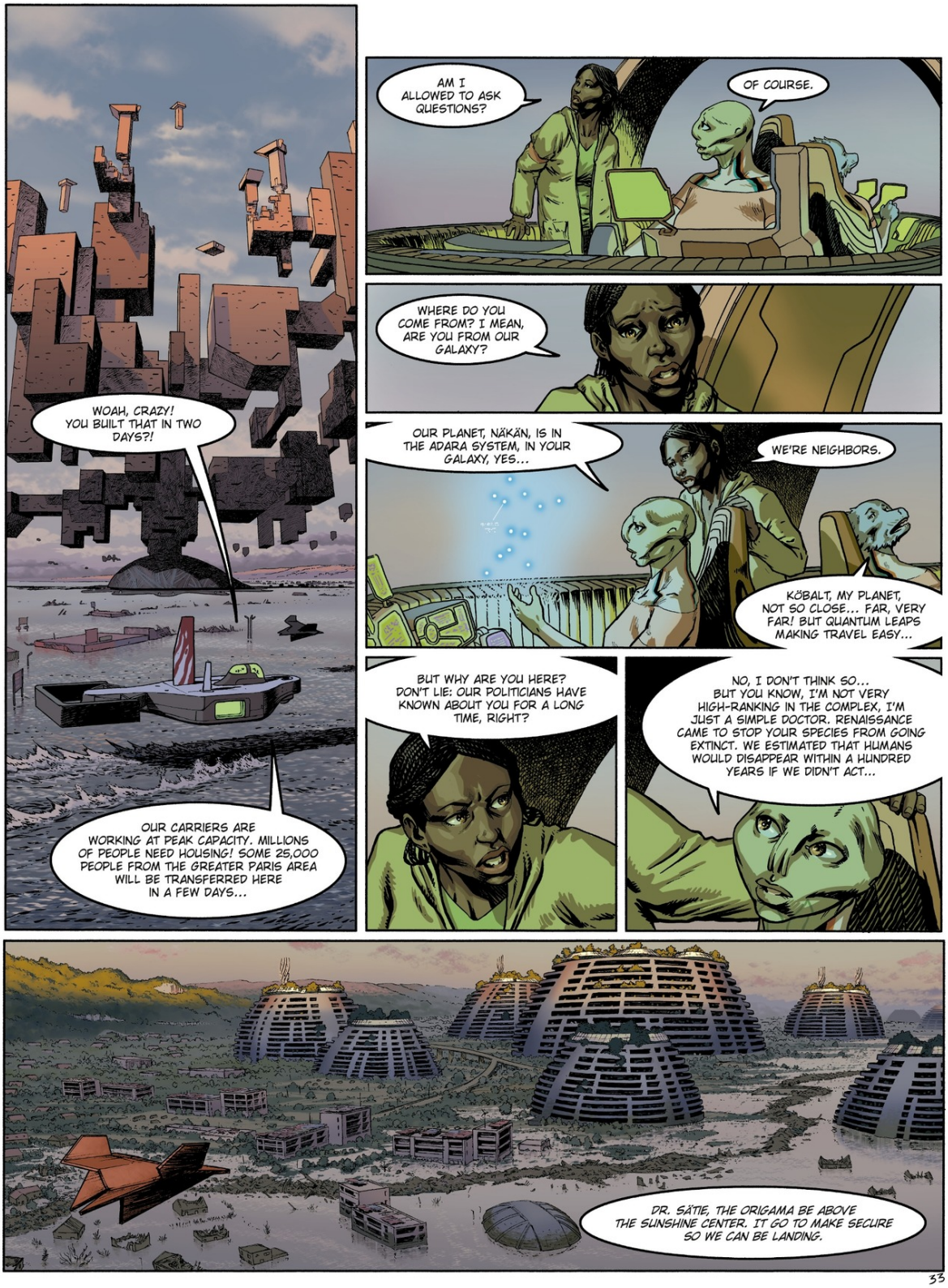
THE SKUÄLLS HAVE OBVIOUSLY SET THEIR SIGHTS ON EARTH'S PLATINUM: SOME OF THE PUREST IN THE UNIVERSE, ACCORDING TO THEIR ILLEGAL SURVEYS!

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMPLEX, ALLOW ME ONE FINAL WORD BEFORE WE VOTE. SOME OF YOU KNOW THE HISTORY OF THE HUMAN SPECIES WELL. WE'VE BEEN OBSERVING THEM FOR A LONG TIME... THEIR VIOLENCE, BUT ALSO THEIR POETRY.

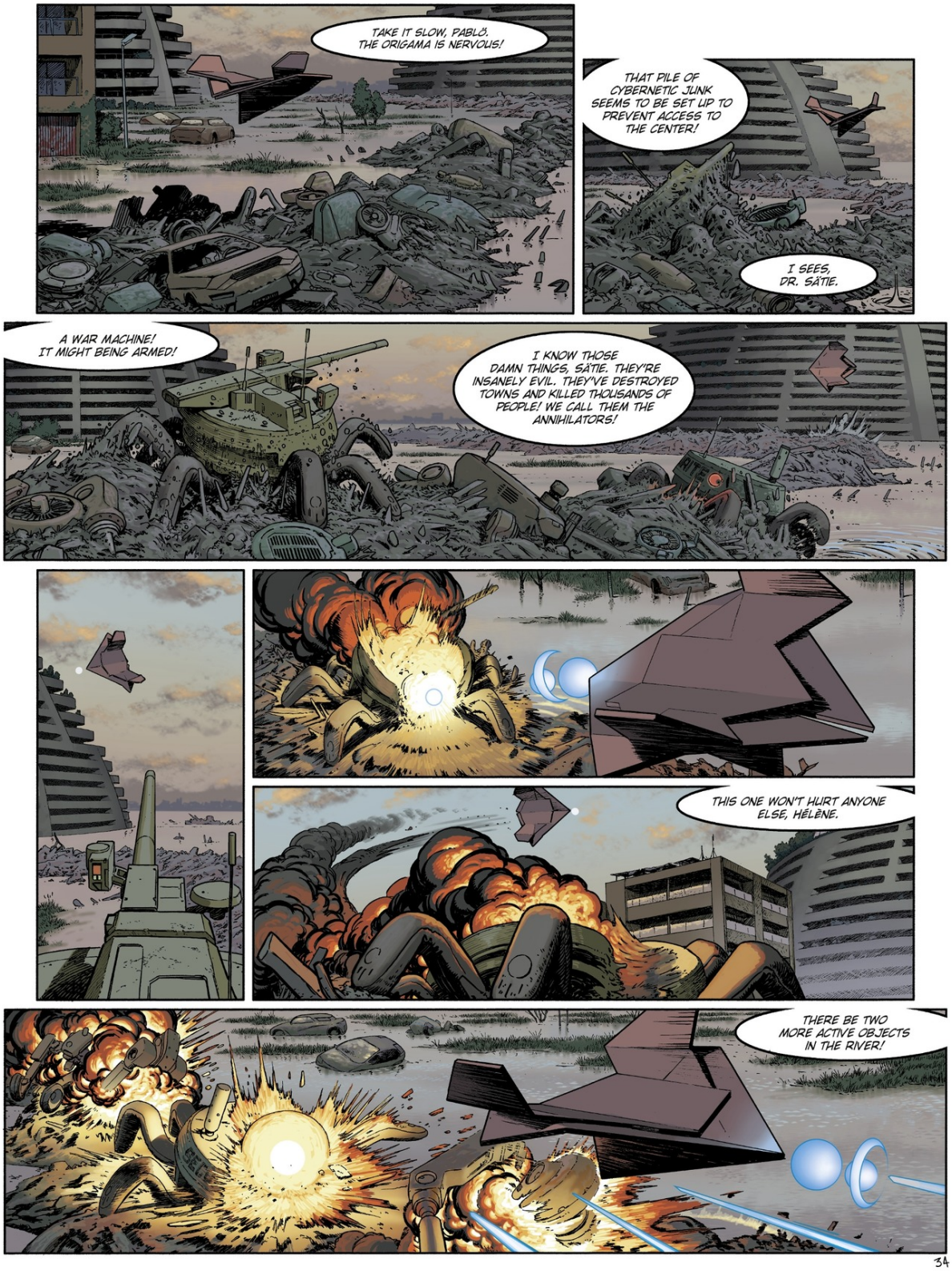
DID WE REACH OUT TO THEM JUST TO PILLAGE WHAT LITTLE THEY HAVE LEFT? REPRESENTATIVES OF TORGHON, WHAT DO YOU SAY?

31

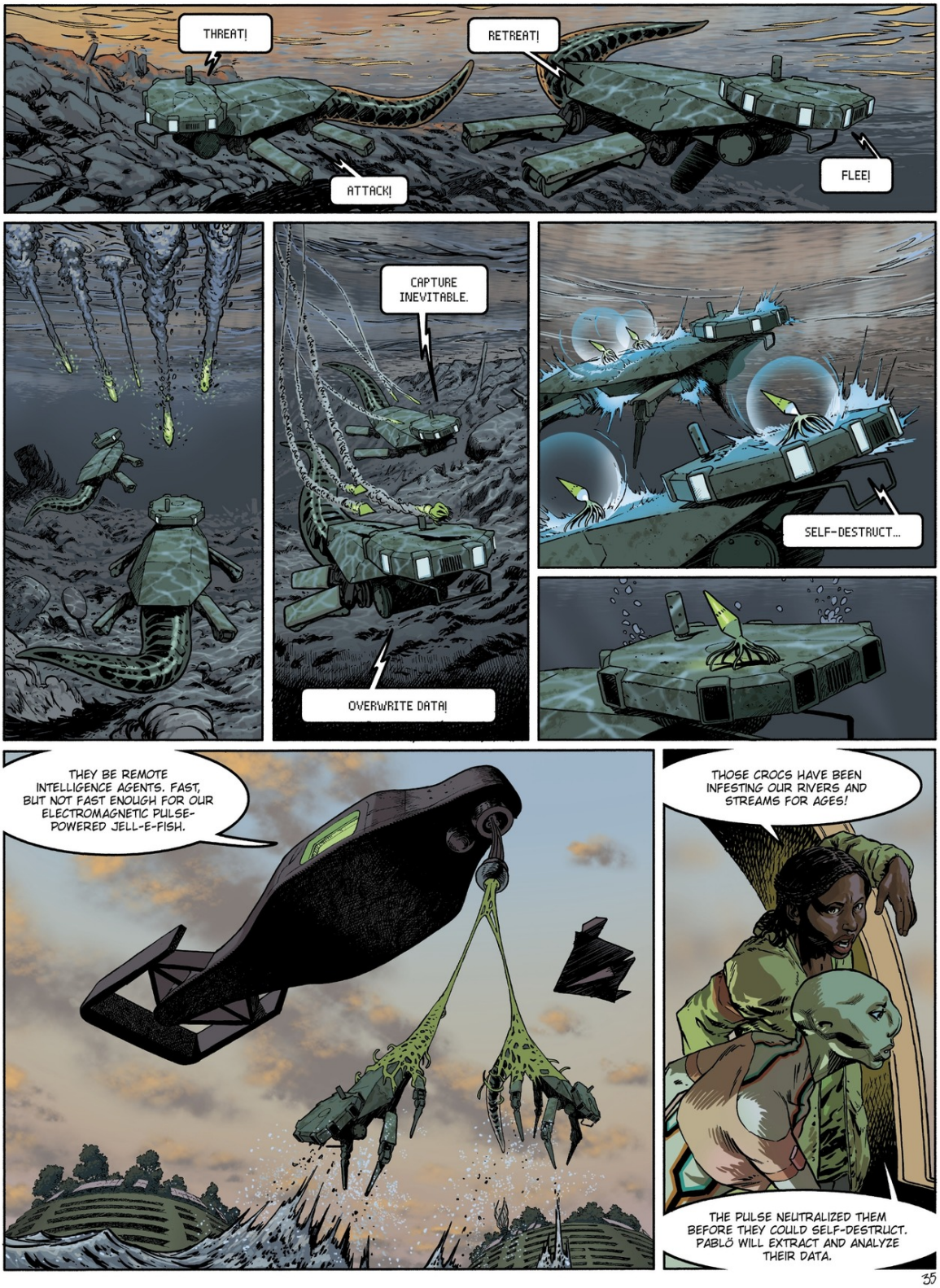
WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT PILLAGING, MADAM? WE'RE MERELY RAISING A LEGITIMATE QUESTION ABOUT FUNDING THIS VENTURE!
THE HUMAN SPECIES IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION, LIKE MOST LIFE ON EARTH...
WE WILL HAVE TO TEACH THEM NEW WAYS TO DEVELOP IF THEY'RE TO EVER HAVE ANY HOPE OF REGAINING THEIR AUTONOMY AND PROSPERITY.
HANDING THEM A BILL AFTER BARELY A WEEK WOULD BE A CURIOUS WAY OF GAINING THEIR TRUST, DON'T YOU AGREE? IT WOULD BE LIGHT-YEARS AWAY FROM THE GOOD MANNERS UPON WHICH THE TORGHON CIVILIZATION WAS BUILT.
MY DEAR JOHN-PÄUL, YOUR BOSS HAS A PROMISING CAREER IN DIPLOMACY AHEAD OF HER!
I HOPE IT'S ENOUGH. THE ORIGAMA AND COLEÖ VOTE REMAINS UNCERTAIN...
WE WILL NOW REFLECT IN SILENCE FOR A FEW MINUTES BEFORE MOVING ON TO THE VOTE!
32


WOAH, CRAZY! YOU BUILT THAT IN TWO DAYS?!
OUR CARRIERS ARE WORKING AT PEAK CAPACITY. MILLIONS OF PEOPLE NEED HOUSING! SOME 25,000 PEOPLE FROM THE GREATER PARIS AREA WILL BE TRANSFERRED HERE IN A FEW DAYS...
AM I ALLOWED TO ASK QUESTIONS?
OF COURSE.
WHERE DO YOU COME FROM? I MEAN, ARE YOU FROM OUR GALAXY?
OUR PLANET, NÄKÄN, IS IN THE ADARA SYSTEM, IN YOUR GALAXY, YES...
WE'RE NEIGHBORS.
KÖBALT, MY PLANET, NOT SO CLOSE... FAR, VERY FAR! BUT QUANTUM LEAPS MAKING TRAVEL EASY...
BUT WHY ARE YOU HERE? DON'T LIE: OUR POLITICIANS HAVE KNOWN ABOUT YOU FOR A LONG TIME, RIGHT?
NO, I DON'T THINK SO... BUT YOU KNOW, I'M NOT VERY HIGH-RANKING IN THE COMPLEX, I'M JUST A SIMPLE DOCTOR. RENAISSANCE CAME TO STOP YOUR SPECIES FROM GOING EXTINCT. WE ESTIMATED THAT HUMANS WOULD DISAPPEAR WITHIN A HUNDRED YEARS IF WE DIDN'T ACT...
DR. SÄTIE, THE ORIGAMA BE ABOVE THE SUNSHINE CENTER. IT GO TO MAKE SECURE SO WE CAN BE LANDING.

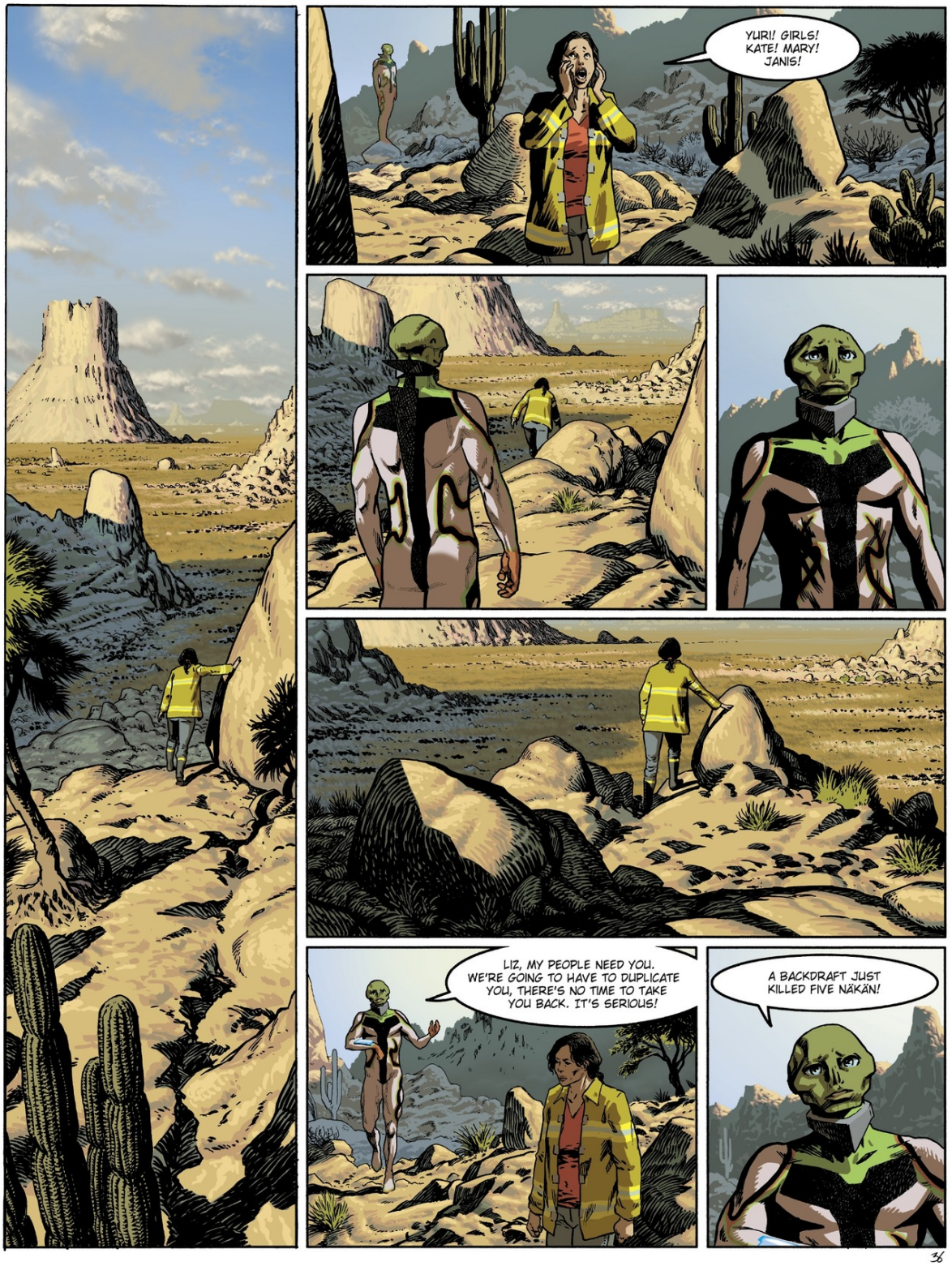
33

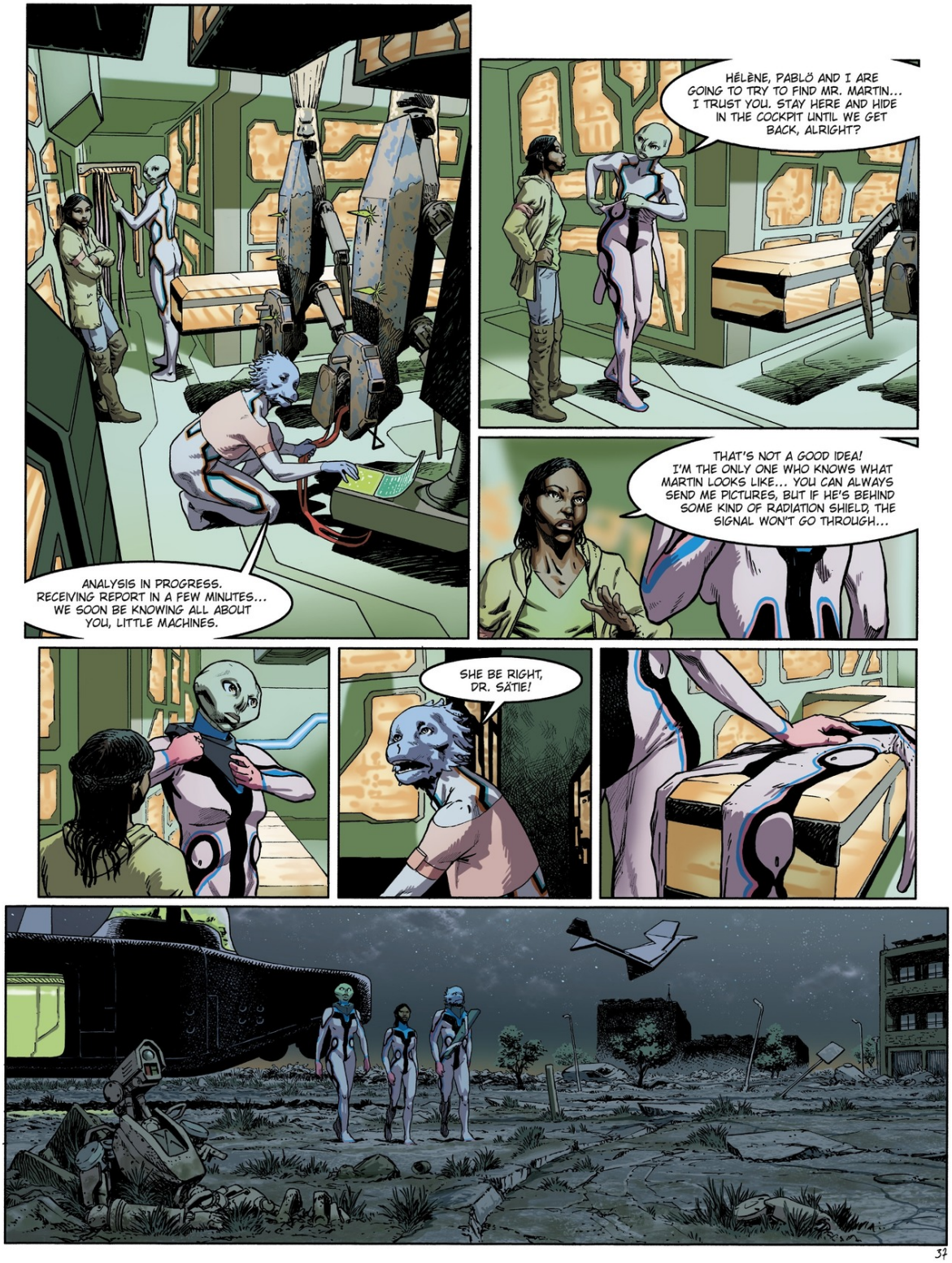

TAKE IT SLOW, PABLO. THE ORIGAMA IS NERVOUS!
THAT PILE OF CYBERNETIC JUNK SEEMS TO BE SET UP TO PREVENT ACCESS TO THE CENTER!
I SEES, DR. SATIE.
A WAR MACHINE! IT MIGHT BEING ARMED!
I KNOW THOSE DAMN THINGS, SATIE. THEY'RE INSANELY EVIL. THEY'VE DESTROYED TOWNS AND KILLED THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE! WE CALL THEM THE ANNIHILATORS!
THIS ONE WON'T HURT ANYONE ELSE, HELENE.
THERE BE TWO MORE ACTIVE OBJECTS IN THE RIVER!

34


THREAT!
RETREAT!
ATTACK!
FLEE!
CAPTURE INEVITABLE.
OVERWRITE DATA!
SELF-DESTRUCT...
THEY BE REMOTE INTELLIGENCE AGENTS. FAST, BUT NOT FAST ENOUGH FOR OUR ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE-POWERED JELL-E-FISH.
THOSE CROCS HAVE BEEN INFESTING OUR RIVERS AND STREAMS FOR AGES!
THE PULSE NEUTRALIZED THEM BEFORE THEY COULD SELF-DESTRUCT. PABLÖ WILL EXTRACT AND ANALYZE THEIR DATA.

35


YURI! GIRLS! KATE! MARY! JANIS!
LIZ, MY PEOPLE NEED YOU. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DUPLICATE YOU, THERE'S NO TIME TO TAKE YOU BACK. IT'S SERIOUS!
A BACKDRAFT JUST KILLED FIVE NÄKÄN!

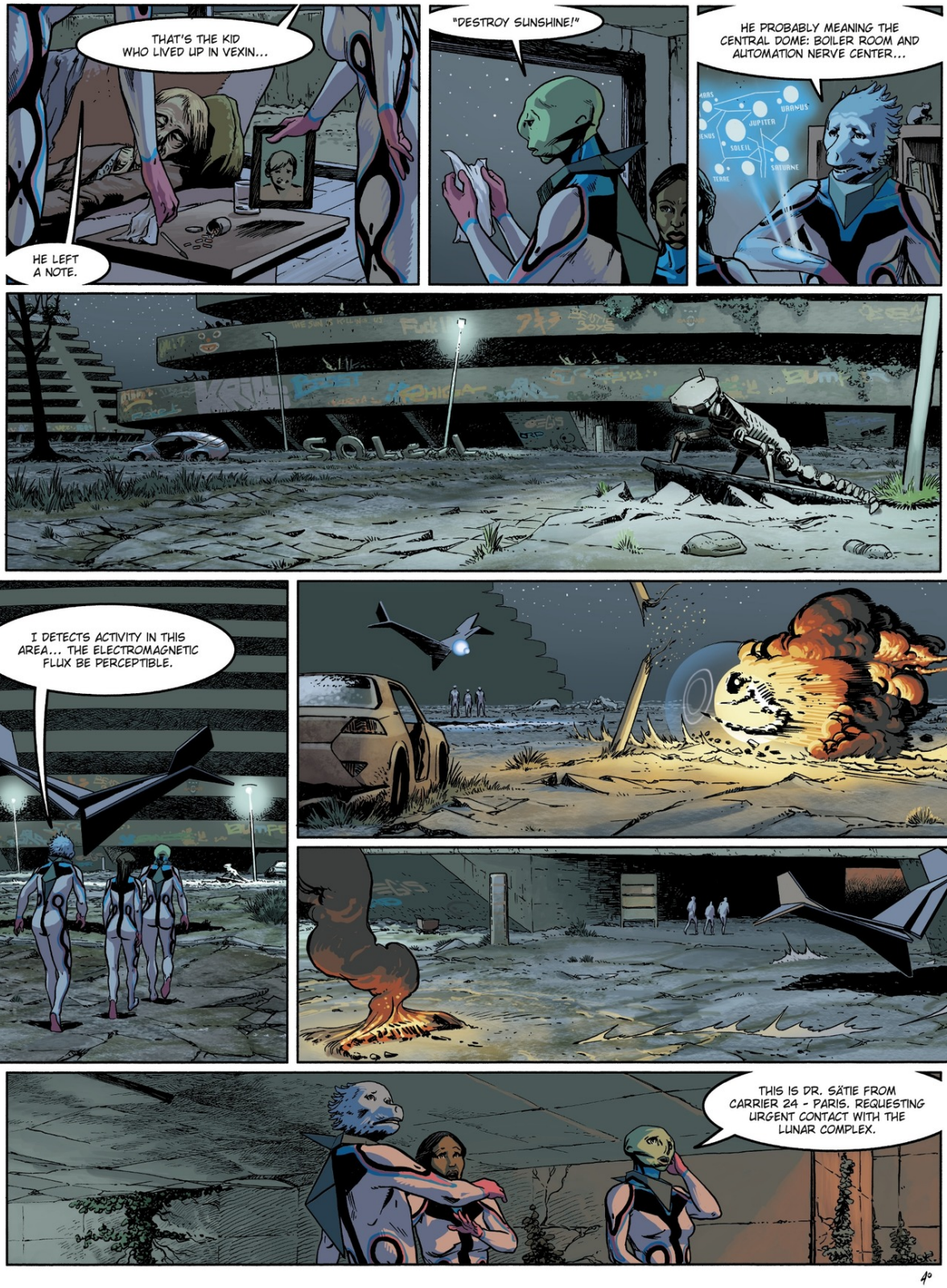

ANALYSIS IN PROGRESS. RECEIVING REPORT IN A FEW MINUTES... WE SOON BE KNOWING ALL ABOUT YOU, LITTLE MACHINES.
HÉLÈNE, PABLÖ AND I ARE GOING TO TRY TO FIND MR. MARTIN... I TRUST YOU. STAY HERE AND HIDE IN THE COCKPIT UNTIL WE GET BACK, ALRIGHT?
THAT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA! I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS WHAT MARTIN LOOKS LIKE... YOU CAN ALWAYS SEND ME PICTURES, BUT IF HE'S BEHIND SOME KIND OF RADIATION SHIELD, THE SIGNAL WON'T GO THROUGH...
SHE BE RIGHT, DR. SÄTIE!

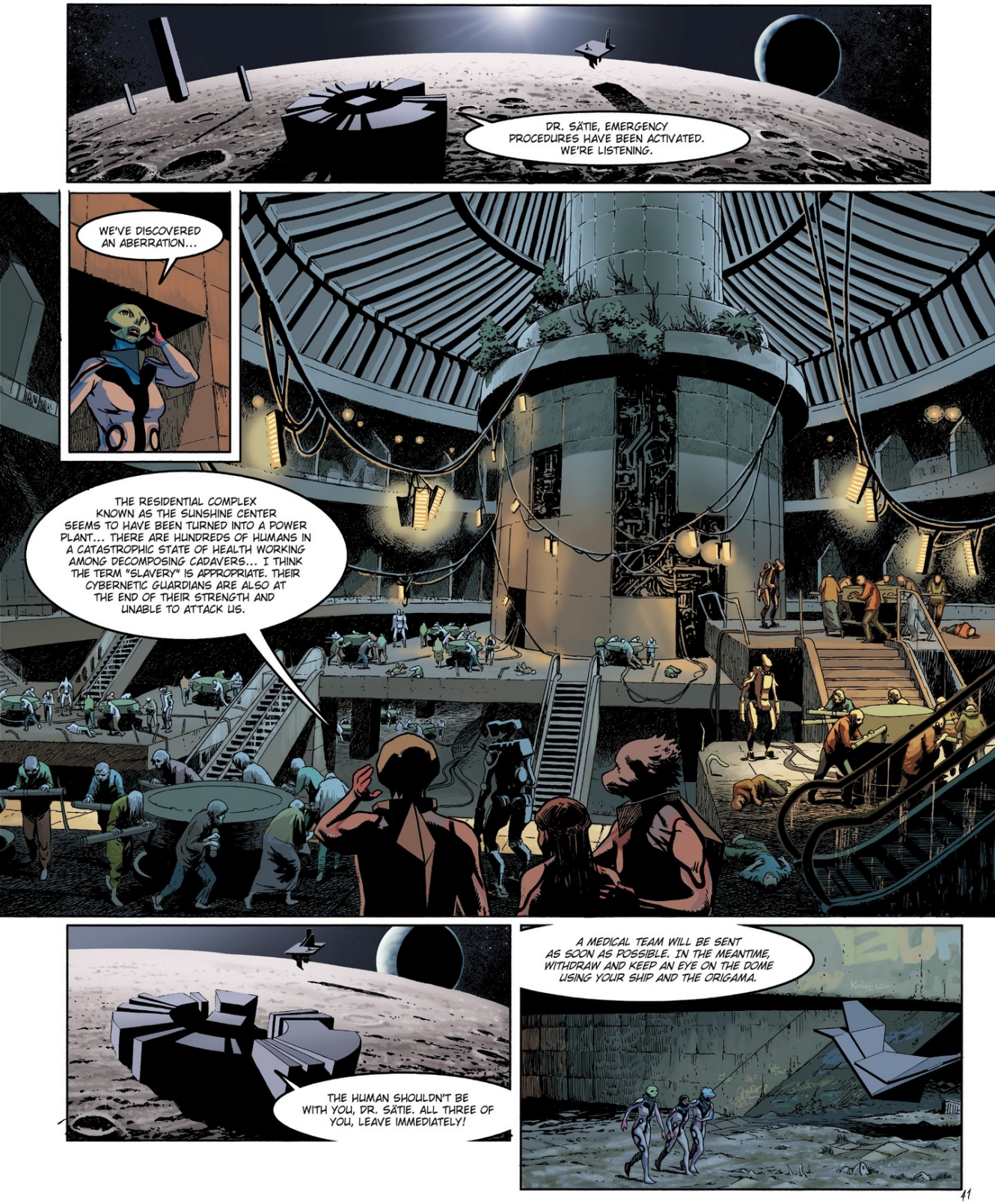
37

COMMENCING SCAN.
CEREBRAL CONNECTOR IN PLACE.
TRANSMISSION.
BEGINNING DUPLICATION.
WE DON'T YET KNOW IF THE COPY WILL BE HOSTILE. IF THINGS GO WRONG, I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.
YES, SIR!
OPENING THE DUPLICATION CHAMBER.
NAME'S LIZ HAMILTON. I HEAR THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE!
38

NO ADDRESS BE LISTED FOR MARTIN.
THERE'S AN INTERACTIVE MAP. SOLAR POWERED. WITH ANY LUCK, IT STILL WORKS!
SOLEIL
JUPITER
ARCHIBALD MARTIN, JUPITER UNIT, 4TH FLOOR, APARTMENT 4.56
POOR GUY. HE'LL NEVER KNOW THAT ALIENS REALLY DO EXIST!

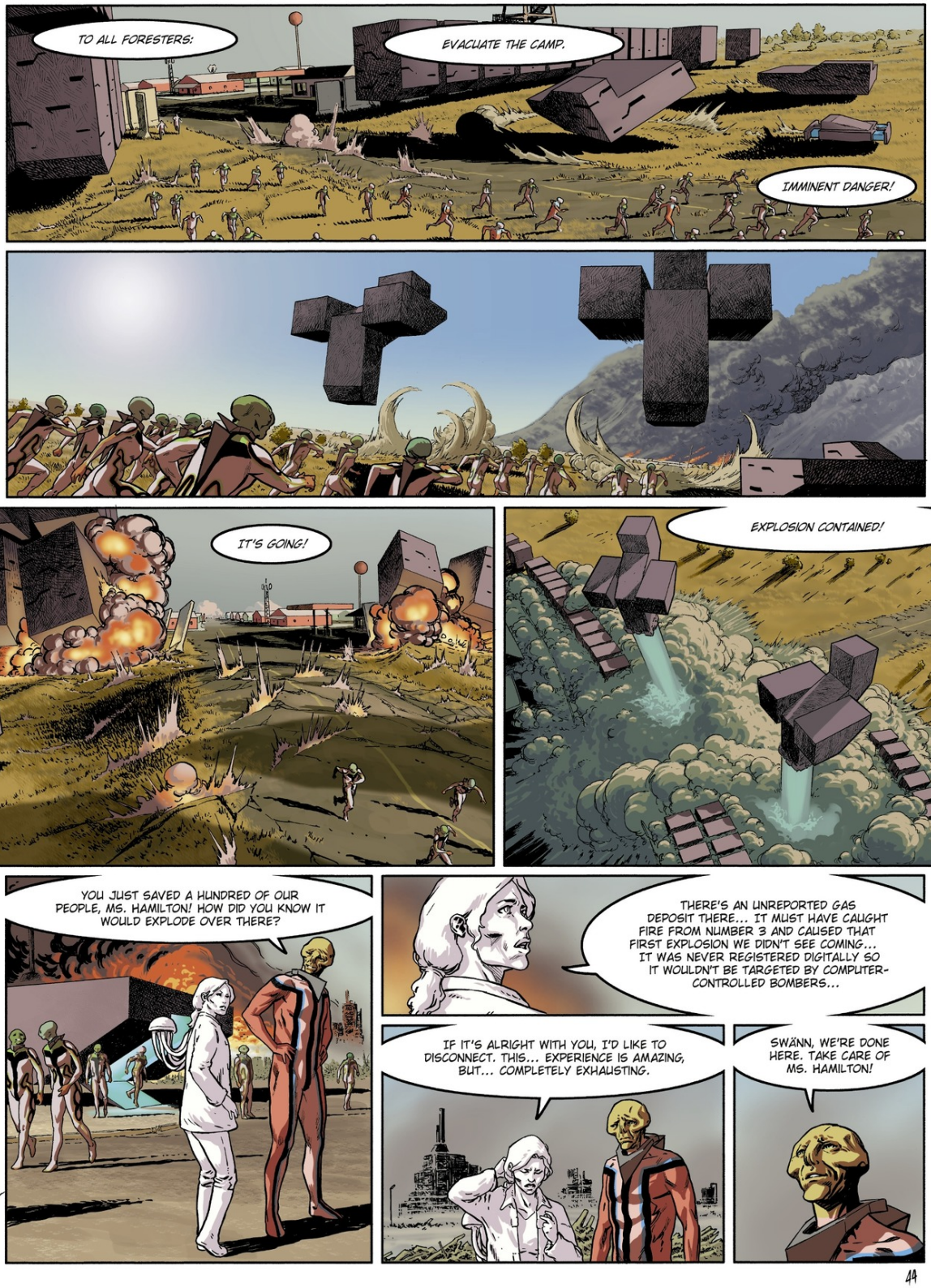
33

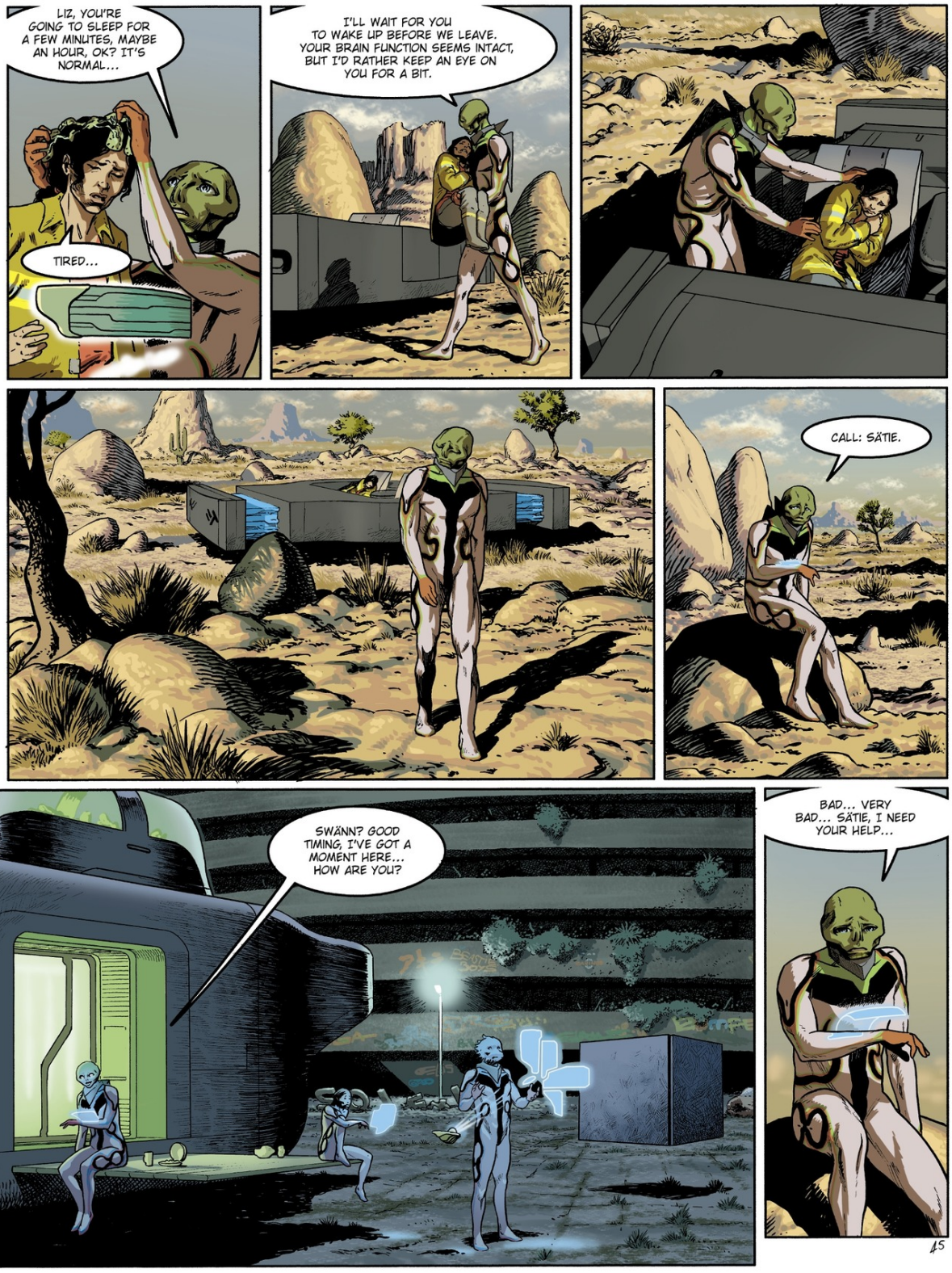

THAT'S THE KID WHO LIVED UP IN VEXIN...
HE LEFT A NOTE.
"DESTROY SUNSHINE!"
HE PROBABLY MEANING THE CENTRAL DOME: BOILER ROOM AND AUTOMATION NERVE CENTER...
MARS
URANUS
JUPITER
VENUS
SOLEIL
SATURNE
TERRE
I DETECTS ACTIVITY IN THIS AREA... THE ELECTROMAGNETIC FLUX BE PERCEPTIBLE.
THIS IS DR. SÄTIE FROM CARRIER 24 - PARIS. REQUESTING URGENT CONTACT WITH THE LUNAR COMPLEX.


DR. SÄTIE, EMERGENCY PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN ACTIVATED. WE'RE LISTENING.
WE'VE DISCOVERED AN ABERRATION...
THE RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX KNOWN AS THE SUNSHINE CENTER SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN TURNED INTO A POWER PLANT... THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF HUMANS IN A CATASTROPHIC STATE OF HEALTH WORKING AMONG DECOMPOSING CADAVERS... I THINK THE TERM "SLAVERY" IS APPROPRIATE. THEIR CYBERNETIC GUARDIANS ARE ALSO AT THE END OF THEIR STRENGTH AND UNABLE TO ATTACK US.
THE HUMAN SHOULDN'T BE WITH YOU, DR. SÄTIE. ALL THREE OF YOU, LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!
A MEDICAL TEAM WILL BE SENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IN THE MEANTIME, WITHDRAW AND KEEP AN EYE ON THE DOME USING YOUR SHIP AND THE ORIGAMA.

NO HUMAN COULD SURVIVE THIS HEAT! EVER SINCE THE EXPLOSION, WE'VE LOST CONTROL. WE'RE APPLYING COOLANT, BUT THE TEMPERATURE IS STILL RISING!
I NEED ANALOG DATA. LET'S GO DOWN NUMBER 3 BEFORE IT MELTS!
WELL, YOU'VE SHUT ALL THE B.O.P. VALVES CORRECTLY... THERE MUST BE GAS LEFT IN THE CIRCUITS, BUT THAT'S OK...
WE CAN LOWER THE PRESSURE A BIT MORE...
IT WAS SOMETHING ELSE THAT CAUSED THE EXPLOSION. LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
A2

EXACTLY: A GAS THAT DAMPENS THE FLAMES AND STOPS THE HEAT FROM RISING...
YOUR MACHINES THERE, IN THE FLAMES, THEY SHOOT OUT SOME SORT OF COOLANT, RIGHT?
SACRIFICE TWO OF THEM!
SEND THEM OVER THERE, TO THE MIDDLE OF YOUR BASE CAMP! QUICKLY!
WE CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT. WE HAVE TWO FREE ONES IN RESERVE!
HURRY UP! IT'S GOING TO EXPLODE ANY MINUTE NOW!

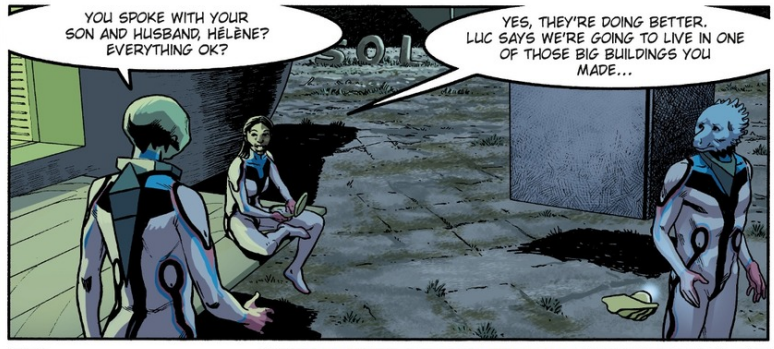

TO ALL FORESTERS:
EVACUATE THE CAMP.
IMMINENT DANGER!
IT'S GOING!
EXPLOSION CONTAINED!
YOU JUST SAVED A HUNDRED OF OUR PEOPLE, MS. HAMILTON! HOW DID YOU KNOW IT WOULD EXPLODE OVER THERE?
THERE'S AN UNREPORTED GAS DEPOSIT THERE... IT MUST HAVE CAUGHT FIRE FROM NUMBER 3 AND CAUSED THAT FIRST EXPLOSION WE DIDN'T SEE COMING... IT WAS NEVER REGISTERED DIGITALLY SO IT WOULDN'T BE TARGETED BY COMPUTER-CONTROLLED BOMBERS...
IF IT'S ALRIGHT WITH YOU, I'D LIKE TO DISCONNECT. THIS... EXPERIENCE IS AMAZING, BUT... COMPLETELY EXHAUSTING.
SWÄNN, WE'RE DONE HERE. TAKE CARE OF MS. HAMILTON!

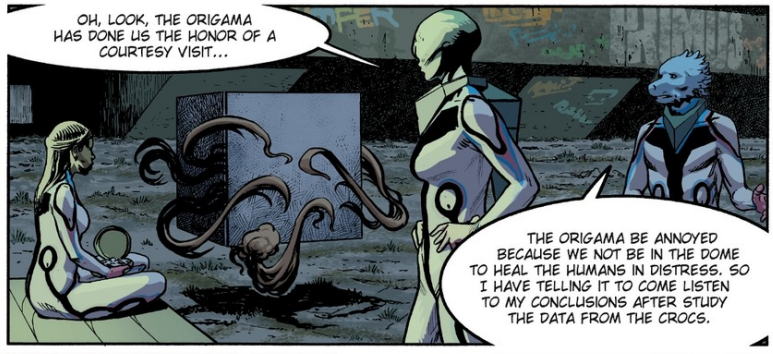

LIZ, YOU'RE GOING TO SLEEP FOR A FEW MINUTES, MAYBE AN HOUR, OK? IT'S NORMAL...
TIRED...
I'LL WAIT FOR YOU TO WAKE UP BEFORE WE LEAVE. YOUR BRAIN FUNCTION SEEMS INTACT, BUT I'D RATHER KEEP AN EYE ON YOU FOR A BIT.
CALL: SÄTIE.
SWÄNN? GOOD TIMING, I'VE GOT A MOMENT HERE... HOW ARE YOU?
BAD... VERY BAD... SÄTIE, I NEED YOUR HELP...

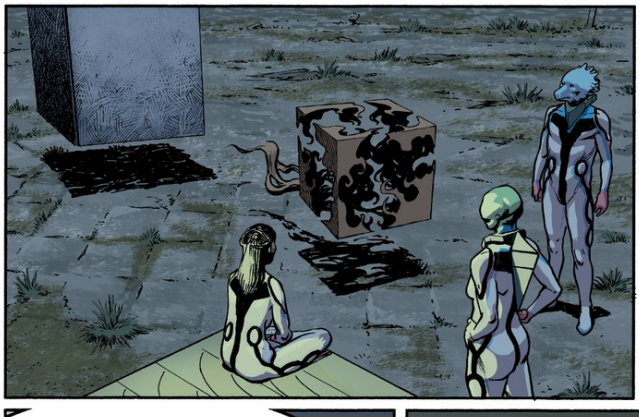
45

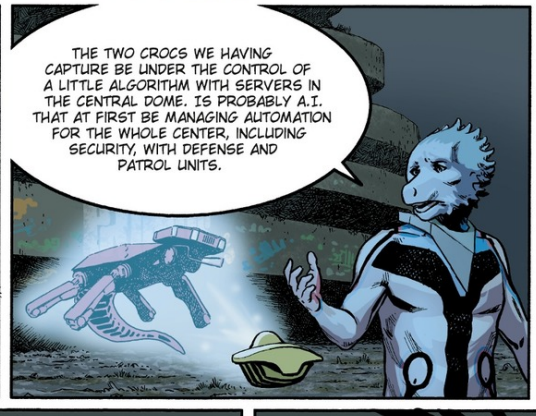
IT'S... IT'S ABOUT LIZ HAMILTON...
HER FAMILY, HER HUSBAND AND DAUGHTERS... I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT THEY WERE IN A QUANTUM LEAP...
ON EARTH? BUT THAT'S NOT ALLOWED!
I KNOW. BUT IT WAS DOCUMENTED AND ARCHIVED... I DON'T KNOW WHO ORDERED IT...
SÄTIE, SOMETHING HORRIBLE HAPPENED IN THE INTERZONE...
I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO TELL HER, BUT... HER WHOLE FAMILY IS DEAD.
SWÄNN, THE LONGER YOU WAIT, THE HARDER IT'LL BE FOR BOTH OF YOU! YOU NEED TO TELL HER AS SOON AS SHE WAKES UP. DURING A QUIET MOMENT... OK?

46


YOU SPOKE WITH YOUR SON AND HUSBAND, HÉLÈNE? EVERYTHING OK?
YES, THEY'RE DOING BETTER. LUC SAYS WE'RE GOING TO LIVE IN ONE OF THOSE BIG BUILDINGS YOU MADE...


OH, LOOK, THE ORIGAMA HAS DONE US THE HONOR OF A COURTESY VISIT...
THE ORIGAMA BE ANNOYED BECAUSE WE NOT BE IN THE DOME TO HEAL THE HUMANS IN DISTRESS. SO I HAVE TELLING IT TO COME LISTEN TO MY CONCLUSIONS AFTER STUDY THE DATA FROM THE CROCS.

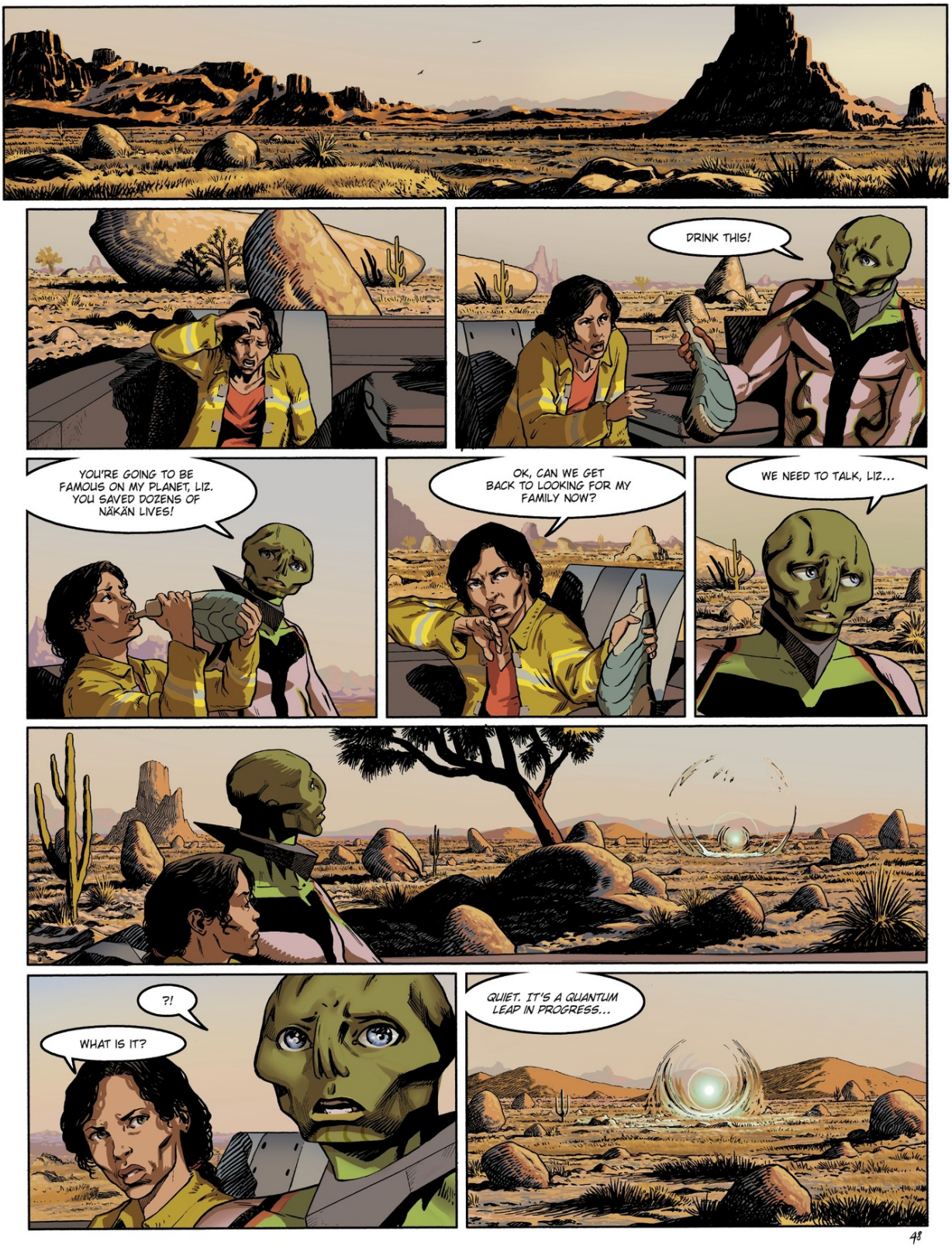


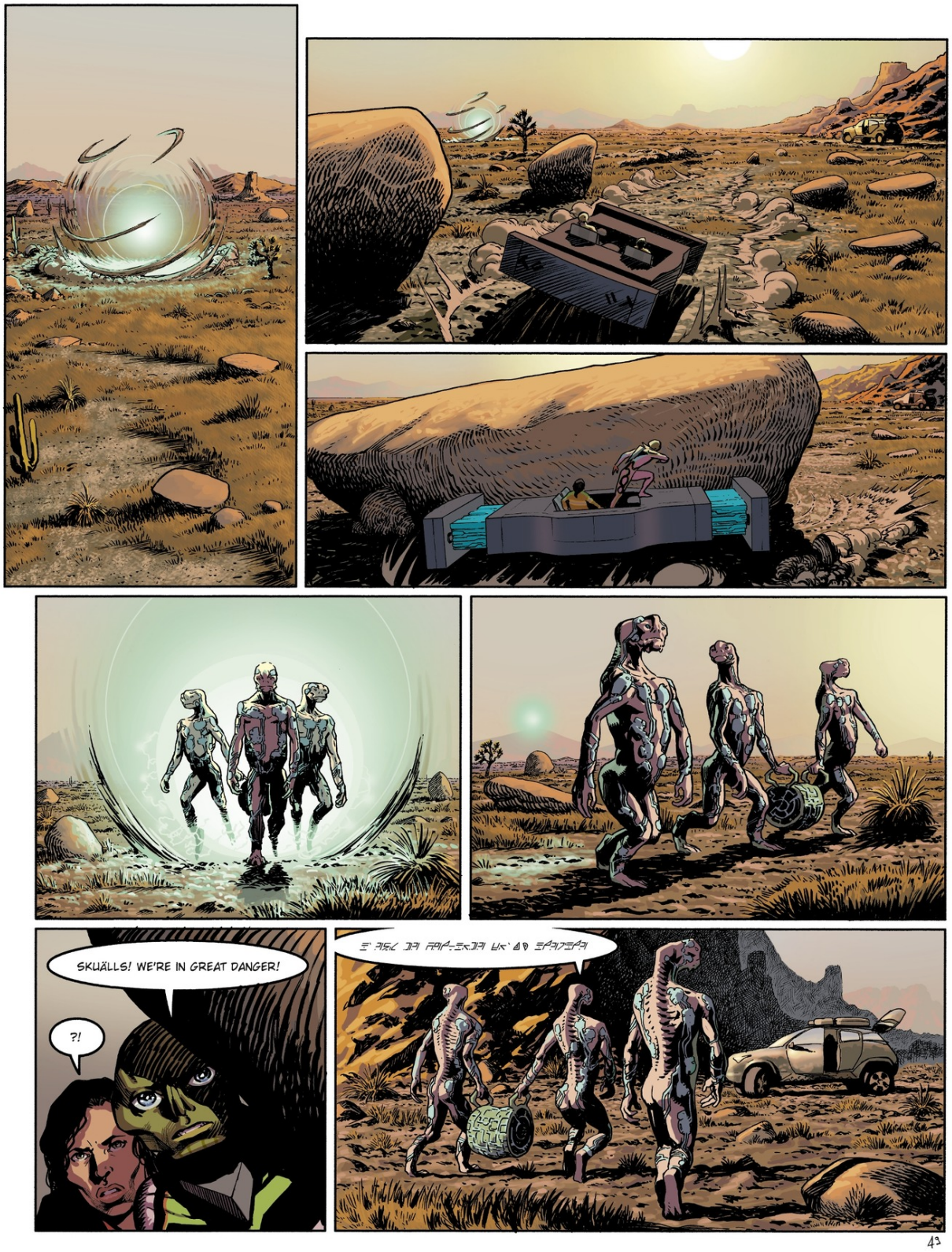

THE TWO CROCS WE HAVING CAPTURE BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF A LITTLE ALGORITHM WITH SERVERS IN THE CENTRAL DOME. IS PROBABLY A.I. THAT AT FIRST BE MANAGING AUTOMATION FOR THE WHOLE CENTER, INCLUDING SECURITY, WITH DEFENSE AND PATROL UNITS.

I'M GUESSING IT WENT ROGUE AND, PROBABLY WITH HELP FROM A FEW HUMANS, FORCED THE INHABITANTS TO PRODUCE THE ENERGY IT NEEDED TO SURVIVE...
EXACTLY. I BELIEVING MARTIN BE ONE HUMAN ACCOMPLICE...

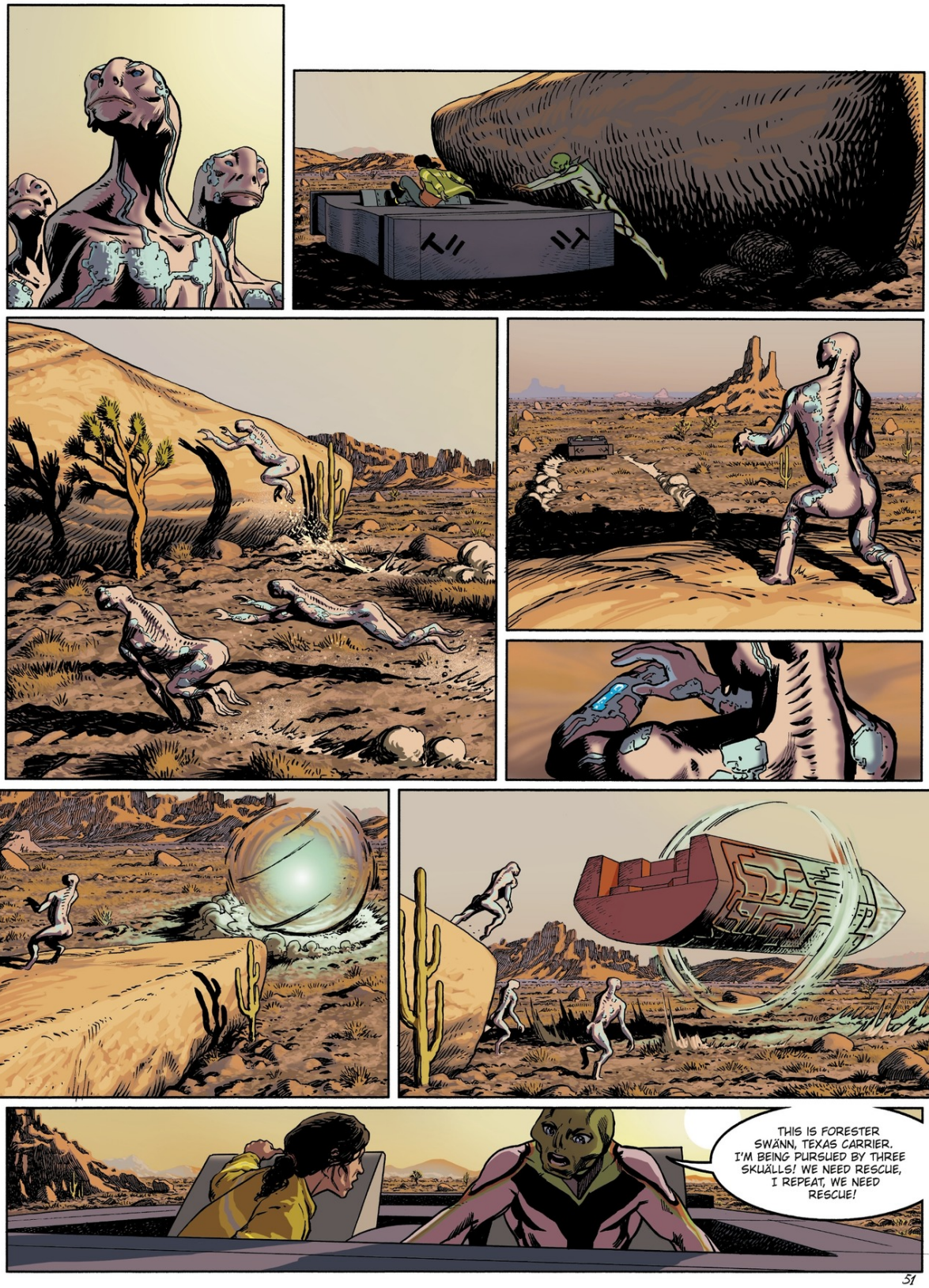
WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH THE OUTBREAK?

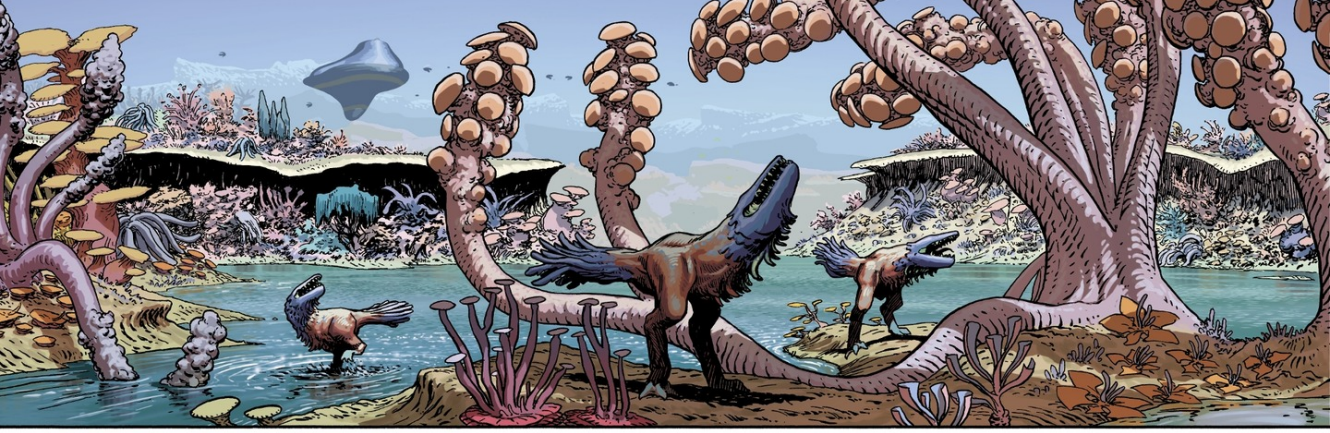
I NOT BE KNOWING. THAT IS WHY THE COMPLEX BE ORDERING US WAITING FOR THE MED TEAM. I BE HEARING ABOUT SIMILAR CASES IN CHINA: ANOTHER CITY BE INFECTED WITH A FEVER THAT SPREAD...

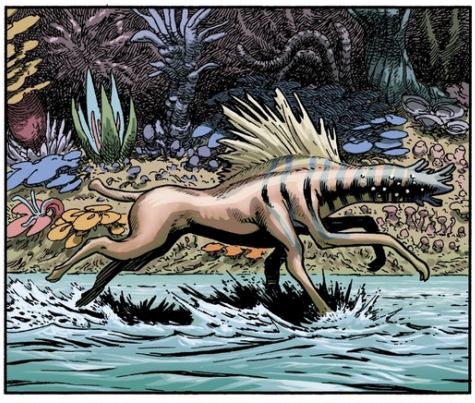

DRINK THIS!
YOU'RE GOING TO BE FAMOUS ON MY PLANET, LIZ. YOU SAVED DOZENS OF NÄKÄN LIVES!
OK, CAN WE GET BACK TO LOOKING FOR MY FAMILY NOW?
WE NEED TO TALK, LIZ...
?!
WHAT IS IT?
QUIET. IT'S A QUANTUM LEAP IN PROGRESS...
48


SKUÄLLS! WE'RE IN GREAT DANGER!
?!

THE SKUÄLLS ARE PART OF THE COMPLEX, BUT THEY'RE NOT AUTHORIZED TO COME TO EARTH. THEY'RE PROBABLY PILLAGERS, CRIMINALS.
DON'T TELL ME THEY'RE HERE BY CHANCE!
LIZ, CLOSE YOUR EYES!
50

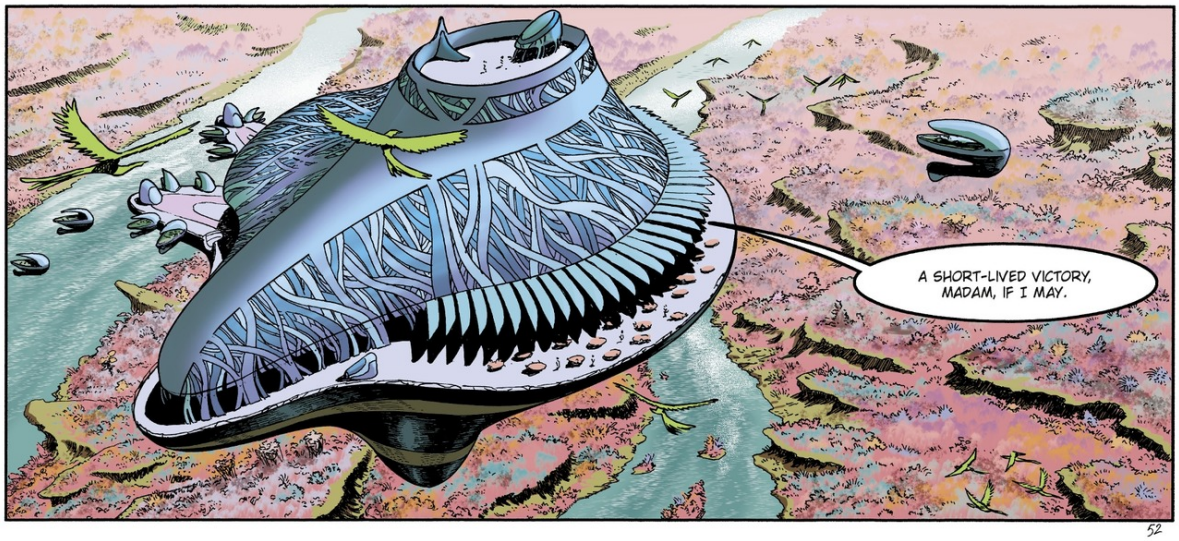

THIS IS FORESTER SWÄNN, TEXAS CARRIER. I'M BEING PURSUED BY THREE SKUÄLLS! WE NEED RESCUE, I REPEAT, WE NEED RESCUE!



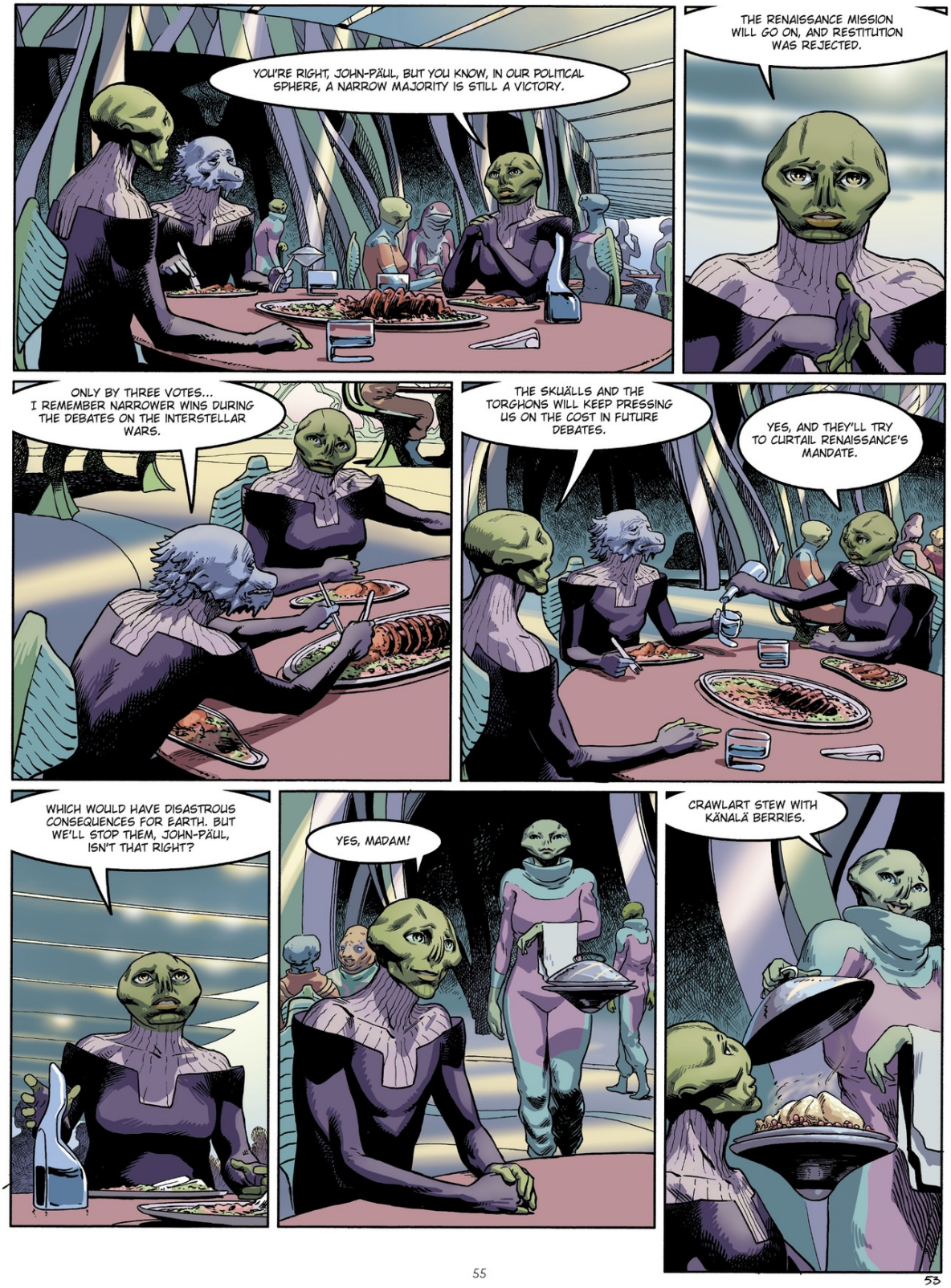


THIS SÄBERER FILET IS WONDERFUL, LISÄ!

ISN'T IT? WE SERVE IT AT WEDDINGS BACK HOME ON KÄNALÄ! I LIKE THIS PLACE: THE PERFECT SETTING FOR CELEBRATING OUR VICTORY AT THE ASSEMBLY TODAY!


A SHORT-LIVED VICTORY, MADAM, IF I MAY.

52


YOU'RE RIGHT, JOHN-PÄUL, BUT YOU KNOW, IN OUR POLITICAL SPHERE, A NARROW MAJORITY IS STILL A VICTORY.
THE RENAISSANCE MISSION WILL GO ON, AND RESTITUTION WAS REJECTED.
ONLY BY THREE VOTES... I REMEMBER NARROWER WINS DURING THE DEBATES ON THE INTERSTELLAR WARS.
THE SKUÄLLS AND THE TORGHONS WILL KEEP PRESSING US ON THE COST IN FUTURE DEBATES.
YES, AND THEY'LL TRY TO CURTAIL RENAISSANCE'S MANDATE.
WHICH WOULD HAVE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES FOR EARTH. BUT WE'LL STOP THEM, JOHN-PÄUL, ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
YES, MADAM!
CRAWLART STEW WITH KÄNALÄ BERRIES.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES ARE CONTINUING ON EARTH, BUT THE TIME FOR DIPLOMACY WILL COME SOON. WILL YOU BE A CANDIDATE, LISA?
I THINK SO. AND YOU, MIRÖ?
MY SON PABLÖ IS THERE, SO YES, MY COMPANION AND I HAVE ALREADY BEGUN THE PROCESS OF OBTAINING POSITIONS ON EARTH.
JOHN-PÄUL IS RIGHT. OUR MAJORITY IS NARROW, AND EVERY NEW INCIDENT WILL GIVE OUR ALLIES REASON TO DOUBT... I HEAR REPORTS ARE BEING DRAWN UP ON SEVERAL CONFRONTATIONS. THE EARTHLINGS ARE QUITE HOSTILE TO US.
HUMANS: A TOXIC MIXTURE OF PRIDE AND VANITY... BUT I LOVED STUDYING THE EVOLUTION OF THEIR CONCEPT OF FREE WILL...
NO MATTER THE PRICE, NO MATTER THEIR DAMNED PSYCHE... WE HAVE TO HELP THEM.
TO BE CONTINUED...

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